The

COMMONWEAL

A Weekly Review of Literature the Arts and Public Affairs

FOUNDED BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

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America Readier for War

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES quietly passed a new $376,000,000 army bill without all the disturbing partizan debates that have paralyzed action on other fronts, while adamantly refusing adequate relief appropriations, and without insisting upon any strengthening of the neutrality legislation.

Congress Lets It Go

President Roosevelt could go south to games of naval war knowing that few forces in the country resist the increase of our own fighting imperialism. Except for the most blatant fascists, the most extreme revolutionaries, and a handful of pacifists and realists, the country seems willing to throw America into the contests for imperial rights and possessions. America's strong right arm is supposed to strike down the evil and uphold the virtuous, instinctively (or instructed by Earl Browder) recognizing each. In the process, we also preserve our own position as dominant business nation of the globe, and even more particularly, the methods by which we have prospered in the past. In the first place, these two jobs may not dovetail any too smoothly, and in the second place, the stars have not written that they are both the right things for us to do. Congress ought to stiffen the neutrality laws and then see what it can do about making America an example rather than a policeman preserving goods, well and ill-gotten by nations all over the world which have all gone to war in the past.

The Bund Takes the Garden

THE SINISTER rally of the pro-Nazi German-American Bund in Madison Square Garden, New York City — 19,000 attending — enforces again the reluctant conclusion that the Nazis are no boobs, that their incredible domestic propaganda is in fact an exportable product, and that fascism is a living American menace. In the sphere of politics, fascism spurns the technique of representative republicanism. It organizes pressure groups, finally on the streets, to enforce directly political decisions. Mail and telegraph barrages are the first step: super-pressure groups, loud and public lobbies. Public demonstrations take the place of thought and argument. A private army of toughs guides and protects its adherents and knocks down its opponents. The resentment and smothered loyalty of young people, frustrated by the failures of finance capitalism, are canalized into hate of Jews and other "non-Aryans" and adoration of some fuehrer. Citizens are prevented by all known techniques from acting reasonably and examining their consciences and disciplining their emotions. They are deliberately reduced to the status of hypnotized cells in a mob whose stimulus is provided from the brain above. Those who can handle the fascist political techniques (and it takes brains, a demagogue of genius, oratory and plenty of money) have a most powerful instrument which they can use largely as they want to—except to humanize their adherents.

Nazis at Home

Police protection of this sort of thing is ironic. Free speech and free assembly for the Bund is necessary as it is for the equally or more pernicious Communist party. But arresting and beating up peaceful protestors is a mockery of the Bill of Rights. And the Madison Square meeting did not exemplify free assemblage or free speech. The Bund's storm troopers, supported by innumerable city police, dictated who was allowed to be at the Garden, everything that was said, and even audience reaction. It took the form of an open conspiracy against constitutional government, like an admittedly revolutionary meeting. We are glad that the "prominent Catholic"

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the organizers said in advance would speak—whom they referred to and with what authority no one knows—did not appear. Unhappily, the papers agreed that "the greatest ovation of the night, however, followed the mention of Father Coughlin, whom Froboese [Midwestern leader of the Bund] praised." The advice of Acting Mayor Morris should be more generalized: "The best way to show your support of our democratic institutions and of your concern for the preservation of our democracy is to shun this assemblage as one would a pestilence." This same advice holds good for too many rallies being held around the country, red and brown rallies.

Teaching Parents to Teach

IT CAN be said, with a security attaching to few general statements, that the movement for parent education is the most important single social effort in the world today. That is because it is concerned with the world's most basic social reality. The disequilibrium which has drained the home of its functions, giving perforce—under stress of moral and economic attacks—more and more of the home's authority and molding power into the hands of agencies outside, has injured the organic science of character training, and has correspondingly injured society, to an extent which every day makes more clear. It is the merit of modern psychology to have come to an appreciation of this truth, even independently of religion, which has always proclaimed it. The work of parent education is designed to reverse the centrifugal pull away from the home, by recognizing its unique and inescapable place in the social scheme, and by rehabilitating its impaired authority and power. It aims to put at the disposal of parents, for the moral and social training of their children, the simple, basic principles, the tried and accepted techniques, of child psychology and classroom procedure. Equally, it aims to attach parents, in a conscious, functioning way, to the community. Including these aims but going beyond them is, of course, the Catholic conception of parent education, as it is being specifically worked out in this country by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

A Creative Contribution

However, it is one of the healthy signs of the times that the Catholic program and the best effort in the secular field operate in harmony, with mutual advantage. The clear and unchanging Catholic principle beyond doubt has steadied and deepened the secular theory; and the range and flexibility of secular experiment have produced methods and approaches which Catholic leaders often gratefully adopt. Two unusually promising contributions should be recorded here. The declaration of the Teachers' Alliance of New York for parent education leading to sex education in the home is so important that treatment of it must be reserved for a future issue. A word may be said, however, regarding the work in the Hudson Guild's Cooperative Nursery School in this city, in which tenement mothers are trained to control and understand their own children by teaching one day a week throughout the year at the school itself. The first year has just concluded, with extraordinarily favorable results. The almost invariable growth in the mothers' understanding of social standards and in their practical power to control and guide the children under their care, forms the main burden of the extensive records by which the experiment was checked throughout. It comes as no surprise that officials of the Board of Education regard the achievement as uniquely valuable, and wish to incorporate it as part of the city's regular school régime.

Credit Unions Increase and Multiply

THE ANNOUNCEMENT that credit unions in the United States have enrolled no less than 2,100,000 members calls attention to a steadily growing method of economic education and credit distribution. Almost any group can apply for a charter for a credit union, but so far in this country they have been organized principally at places of employment. The most recent large-scale development, the credit union set up under the Federal Farm Credit Act, is the most rapidly growing. Labor unions, residential districts and parishes are just beginning to organize these constructive self-help banks. So many products are beyond the purse of the average worker that he has to buy them on time or go to a loan shark, often both. When he is unable to pay up, his wages may be garnisheed, liens may be levied or he may even lose his job if his employer won't have anyone working for him who is deeply in debt. If he belongs to a credit union he deposits a small fixed sum each week. When an emergency arises or he wishes to make a sizable purchase, he applies for a loan before a credit committee chosen by the members. The request is granted on the basis of his purpose, his ability to repay and his reliability and at a fixed rate less than a third of most finance company rates. The interest charged is distributed to members on the basis of their deposits. Up to June 30, 1938, only .04 percent of the loans of federal credit unions had been written off as bad loans. The setting up of a cooperative banking system for the deposits of member societies by the Consumers Cooperative Association of North Kansas City, Missouri, is a further step toward economic decentralization and independence for those of us of moderate means.

Distributing Economic Power

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The Giantism of Insurance Companies

WORKING in a diametrically opposite direction are the nation's big insurance companies, it was revealed before the monopoly committee hearings at the moment adjourned while waiting for more data from the Federal Trade Commission. Their place in the national economic picture is indicated by the fact that the 49 largest companies own 11 percent of the debt of the United States, 10 percent of the municipal bonds, 23 percent of the railroad bonds, 22 percent of the utilities, 15 percent of the national industrial debt and 14.5 percent of our city mortgages. The extent to which the directors of these companies can throw their economic weight and influence around is indicated by the largest, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, which has the responsibility of investing $2,000,000 a day. It is a mutual company and hence a sort of cooperative, but in actual fact the management is self-perpetuating and none of the 27,000,000 policyholders has any effective means of exerting the slightest influence on the choice of directors, the company's size or the commissions of the insurance salesmen, the type of company investments or the dividends to be based on the annual earnings. The inquiry may stretch out for another two years but so far it seems to indicate that there are no effective checks on the management's decisions. Efforts to organize Metropolitan's workers have met with little success. In the long run the savings bank insurance plan of Louis D. Brandeis may prove an effective antidote, but in the meantime something must be done to effectually regulate these dynamos of economic power in the interests of the public, if not force them into smaller units.

Break-up Indicated

Severe Laws in Kearny

A NOSTALGIC note, an echo of a vanished time, strikes gently through the humdrum din of the present, in the news from Kearny, New Jersey. If some community within our ken were to enact a decree making periwigs and satin smalls the ordinary street wear, or banishing the automobile in favor of the coach and six preceded by a running footman, we might not emulate these changes; but we should at least pay tribute to the *pietas* which selected them from the past, and the sturdy character which decreed them for the present, despite all the powers of modernity. In some such way one must bow to Kearny. Its historic preferences, to be sure, run along sterner lines than ruffs and farthingales; it is not so much the color as the coercive power of distant times that it strives to recapture. But this takes perhaps even more single-mindedness and courage. Kearnyites and all others within their gates are to be kept virtuous in the same way as the first New England colonials were kept virtuous: by severe limitations of high jinks, and laws with a bite in them to prove to the frivolous that they don't mean maybe. Merry-go-rounds, sleight-of-hand, juggling, are to be no more; "feats of uncommon dexterity and agility of body" must be performed somewhere else—Olympic candidates take note. The sexes may not exchange garb—thereby doing away with fraternity initiations, Hallowe'en masquerades and be-slacked and be-shorted lady hikers, all in one blow. Neither bear nor bull may be baited in Kearny. At night no dog may bark, no "machine" make a loud noise, nor any chimney sweep, rag-picker, or scavenger pursue his trade. Nude Bathing seems to be permitted under cover of darkness, but that may be just a lacuna, to be plugged up later. These laws are of course for the most part not new but very old. What is new is that they are being given teeth, to the tune of $200 fines or 90 days.

Lex Caerulea Rediviva

Social Security and Assorted Pensions

THE HEARINGS on social security in Washington are being peculiarly underplayed in the press. Politically, pensions systems are furnishing just about the most powerful electoral instruments loose in the country. The admitted need for security laws points directly at the most obvious failure of the present American system. And something will undoubtedly be done with pensions and their financing in the current session of Congress, at least an extension of the insurance coverage to seamen, domestic servants and employees of educational and charitable institutions. Just which politicians will benefit most by the campaign to give more voters more money is a serious question in party politics being solved in a far from serious-minded congressional contest. The deepest debate which will grow from the present hearings will probably center around the security reserve fund. But there are more colorful aspects. First there was Dr. Townsend's own testimony, which, since he kept away from financing plans, was a sound warning that unless something is done, the country is in for fundamental trouble. The growing strength of the General Welfare Federation, advocating a new gross income tax of $7,00,000,000 to supply "sixty dollars at sixty," was an additional indication of which way the wind blows. The merger with the Townsendites proposed by the Workers Alliance, powerful Stalinist-appearing union of the unemployed, was a strange proposal. Unity of the unemployed with the aged would produce a pressure group of unprecedented dimensions, even though citizens over sixty have not before been

Not Necessarily the Same

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considered the lilkiest recruits to communit ideology. But the problems are interrelated. Most poetic of the new trends is the formation of a "Citizens' Legion" to lead a strike against social security taxes. The fantasy comes from the fact that this strike against pension taxes originates in California.

The Great Cemeteries under the Moon

AS THE terrible Spanish Civil War draws to its close, THE COMMONWEAL presents an article by Father Bruehl dealing with Bernanos's "A Diary of My Time," one of the most important documents arising from the war, and an article which is itself a most thoughtful and eloquent and charitable consideration of that tragedy. Father Bruehl centers the discussion upon the third of three points which we feel François Mauriac defined with justice and precision in the January 27 issue of *Temps Présent:* (1) All Catholics agree that communism and Marxism are irreconcilable enemies. (2) They also agree that it is not enough for a doctrine to be violently opposed to communism to keep it from being itself anti-Christian. (3) "It is on the third point that they have the greatest difficulty in arriving at a satisfactory agreement. Some profess that if an adversary of communism declares itself as being at the same time the official protector of the Church, then it represents the Good in the symbolic combat of the two cities." Others (and with them THE COMMONWEAL) object that the complexities, activities and entanglements of this force can deprive it of such an angelic position. This, we believe, is the point of prudence and policy which Father Bruehl has brilliantly isolated. We do not consider the sides in Spain black and white. For, as Father Bruehl says, "after all, life does not, as Mr. Bernanos would have us believe, present absolute contrasts between good and evil, black and white; these merely appear in various degrees of admixture." The Franco side appears to us a compromise, and we insist that Americans here do not have to, cannot, and should not develop in this country that compromise. Father Bruehl supports, while Bernanos condemns the compromise made in Spain by most of the Spanish bishops; as individual laymen, we have never hinted at judging that. But we quote Father Bruehl in our own, and we believe his, context: "Plainly this is not a question of doctrine nor of internal spiritual administration but one of prudence and policy which admits of discussion."

Approach and Conclusion

It is treason to try to line up America as forces have been lined up in Spain. We have too many problems whose solution must begin at home, too many evils and injustices demanding immediate attention over here to have hatred stirred up among ourselves over a foreign tragedy whose uncertain total meaning serves as a football in ideological war. We condemn utterly the atrocites committed against priests, religious and laymen. We cannot forget that the Holy Father also protested against the bombing of open Spanish cities, and has condemned more than one aspect of the doctrines held by Franco's companions at arms. So, while we reject flatly the Loyalists, neither do we make party with the Nationalists, except to the extent that their ends are to combat communism, anarchy and atheism—only part of their ends and means. Like François Mauriac, we "are sensitive to the peril the Church runs if Catholics join party, in the eyes of a whole people and in the face of the world, with revolutionary soldiers who only carry the day thanks to the support of Italian Fascism and German Racism." We would strike out the "only," but would join in the "fear that truth might be compromised in that atrocious quarrel, doctrine contaminated, the Church enslaved." And we look with Father Bruehl to the cultivation of Catholic Action in grappling with the problems of our days, which "supplies the appropriate machinery, since the closer contact between clergy and laity which Catholic Action intends to promote will also bring about a fuller mutual understanding and a heartier cooperation."

American Ships and Ideas

ALTHOUGH the emergency, "Hog Island" method of providing adequate merchant tonnage in war time still appears best to a number of shipping experts, it has definitely been discarded now for a really grandiose ship construction program. The United States Maritime Commission under Rear Admiral Emory S. Land justifies its plans on the grounds that the badly outmoded American merchant marine does not provide an adequate auxiliary service for the navy, is not large enough to hold up foreign freight rates in case of rate wars or to serve the nation in case of a war where the European powers call their vessels home, as Germany did at the time of the Munich crisis.

It has taken a good year to get the 50-ships-a-year program under way, but in coming months its first fruits will receive increasing public attention. There will be a number of super-tankers similar to the newly-commissioned Cimarron, which was partly subsidized by the government for incorporating high-speed engines and other features useful for self-defense. No less than 8 new American freighters of the 10,000-ton class are slated to be put into commission this spring, with 6 more of the same type scheduled to appear before the end of the year. The America, which bosts the largest keel ever laid in a United States shipyard,

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is to be launched next September for passenger service to Europe; Mrs. Roosevelt herself will preside. In one year American tonnage of ships of 10,000 tons or over is supposed to jump from 615,000 to 1,000,000 tons, while a total of 500 new ships is contemplated in all.

Modernization of ships already in service is also proceeding apace. It has already been accomplished for the American Republic Lines plying between New York and the east coast of South America, and the American President Lines which is taking over the old Dollar Line ships and service around the world. It is only fair to take into account that other vessels, like those of the Munson Line, are being withdrawn from the merchant fleet and sold and transformed into army transports.

The obvious question is how the United States proposes to use all this added tonnage in an era of shrinking international trade. Either the ships will lie idle, when they are not sailing around half empty, or they will pocket some of the business of the merchant marines of other nations. This latter would tend to depress international trade still further, for several nations buy certain American goods only because of the exchange balances they set up by transporting our products. In fact, we ship only about 30 percent of our goods in American bottoms. Merchant marines are widely considered as an arm of government now, and subsidies are common if not universal. But is there sufficient reason to believe that the Hull trade treaties can sufficiently expand American foreign trade to warrant such construction, or that it is wise to subsidize our merchantmen so handsomely that we drastically curtail foreign shipping revenues? These are serious questions.

One aspect of the problem is more encouraging, the improved working conditions on many of the new and modernized vessels. While the American shipping industry, which really reached its peak before the Civil War, can boast of the achievements of its clippers, whalers and other famous types, it was also characterized by the "shanghai" method of recruiting crews and a harsh discipline which made the members of the crew refrain from protesting against the food and other conditions for fear of being clapped into irons for mutiny. The tough tradition has persisted with American captains, shipowners and crews, and while an American sailor enjoyed higher pay, his living conditions were decidedly worse than those on boats of various other nationalities. Too many men were crowded into a single room, locker space was inadequate, sanitation primitive, and sleep at times impossible because of proximity to the propeller shaft or other noisy gear or bad arrangement of turns of duty. These conditions and this tradition go far toward explaining the malevolence of recent seamen's labor disputes.

By setting up decent labor standards on the new ships it is subsidizing the government is able to influence the entire industry. Minimum wage scales have been set. Each vessel must be manned by a determinable number of men to qualify for the subsidy. Regulations enacted in 1937 specify that living quarter space must be 120 cubic feet per man and the crew quarters in the new ships' specifications are much larger and more livable.

Another reason for the bad working conditions among the seamen goes back to the difficulties of effective unionization, for the sailor has no roots comparable to those of a factory worker or office employee. Organizers who stayed on shore tended to lose contact with actual sea-going conditions; often they were carried away by the opportunities for personal aggrandizement or used their executive positions to further the cause of revolution, a technique which often required training in the arts of violence. Happily the new vessels which are subsidized, at least, will provide crew quarters which entail a humanly decent minimum of living and storing space and of privacy, and union-owner agreements are beginning to better the conditions that were the chief cause of so many of the recent strikes.

In support of the new merchant marine it must be said that like civil aviation it is a type of preparedness that does not involve a warlike spirit with it. The prestige it will bring should also conceivably secure more active American foreign trade. We should like to know, though, how the figure of 50 new ships a year was reached and what the maritime authorities propose to do with all the new liners. While the vessels already under construction or contracted for might well be put to good use, the boats envisioned for the future should not be ordered before more convincing data as to their need is presented to the American public.

The struggle between France and Germany for South American trade was epitomized by their contest to provide the most impressive ships. And France was so stricken by the destruction by fire of the Atlantique, her most luxurious South American liner, before the maiden voyage, that she has left the charred hull of the vessel beached in a French harbor ever since. As a liner brings far more than an aggregate of passengers, crew and freight into a foreign port, our new American ships can serve as the best kind of propaganda. They can give testimony to the fact that Americans do things as efficiently, if not more so, than the most absolute of the dictators. They can demonstrate that an approach to a solution of conflicting class interests can be made through sound organization and genuine collective bargaining. In short they can bear eloquent witness that the American way has an answer for the problems of this sorely troubled world.

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The Budget and State Investments

By E. L. MUNZER

THE BUDGETS of the federal government proposed for 1939 and 1940 are logical steps in the evolution, imminent in all "capitalistic" countries since the war and especially since the great depression of 1929, from the pure *supply budget* of the liberal era to the *investment budget* of the new economic era, whether the latter takes the form of state-socialism or state-capitalism. The estimated expenditures for the fiscal years 1939 and 1940, $9,500,000,000 and $9,000,000,000 respectively, represent about 15 percent of the present and presumable future national income, compared with federal expenditures of about 2 percent of the national income previous to the war. The proposed expenditures are increasingly allocated to investments which formerly would have been left to private initiative and individual enterprise. Out of about $9,000,000,000 to be spent, public works, the agricultural adjustment program, unemployment relief, and additional armaments—to the extent that they may be classified as public investments replacing private production—account for about $4,000,000,000, or 40 to 45 percent of the total.

As is the case with most other governments, the American government is and remains the greatest investor in the country; if the trend of private investment follows the direction established in the post-depression period, the predominant position of the state in creating new capital goods and directing the use of savings and credits will become stronger and more marked from year to year. If we exclude investments for maintenance of existing capital goods (repairs, modernization of existing plants), we may say that out of the total annual investments of the American economy—according to the present level, about $10,000,000,000—the state initiates, owns or controls one-half, compared with about 5 percent in pre-war times and 10 to 15 percent during the decade from 1920 to 1930. The state, in liberalistic times largely restricted to the functions of a police force, has become the biggest entrepreneur and the decisive controlling factor in the production of capital goods. America is not exempt from the economic fate of the rest of the world.

These structural changes are not based on, or explained by, mere chance. It cannot be denied that the capitalist economy shows a growing inclination to fail and to miss its opportunities. For eight years the conditions for a rapid recovery of investment activity have been ideal: low rates of interest, ample money, a comparatively high rate of savings, technical progress in nearly all sections of industry. There are, of course, repressive forces on the other side: the breakdown of world-markets owing to protectionism and the striving to achieve self-sufficiency, political unrest, growing taxation, unbalanced budgets. These are mostly, however, consequences of the crisis of 1929 and 1930 which cannot justify antecedent failures. It is no doubt true that no agency other than the state could have handled the mass bankruptcy of 1929. The refusal of the governments of the world to concern themselves with that situation would have created an atmosphere soluble only by dangerous and destructive revolutionary outbursts, more radical than any of the social evolutions witnessed by contemporary history.

The investor state will become characteristic of the economy of the future. J. M. Keynes may be right in assuming that the responsibilities involved in large-scale private investment are beyond the capacities of the individual; since the time when he advocated investment authorities, these responsibilities have tremendously increased. It is not only a possible waste of capital which imperils private planning on a large basis; legislation and sociological change have meanwhile added considerably to the risks incurred during the last epoch of capitalism. Taxation, public expenditure, the growing importance of fixed costs, wages, which, by collective bargaining, tend to become fixed elements in industrial and agricultural calculations, and the necessary interference of the state in nearly all business affairs in times of political tension—all place before the individual problems which even an economic genius could not hope to master. This applies especially to the production of non-consumer's goods where the investment of considerable amounts of capital is at stake and where failures are paid for by heavy losses to the community. The production and distribution of consumption goods require far less direct intervention on the part of the state.

These considerations provide us with a picture of the economy of the future. Russia from one direction and the capitalistic or semi-capitalistic states from the other will approach a middle status in which the capital goods industries are socialized, or at least publicly manipulated, while the finished goods and the consumers' goods industries will be dominated by the principles of a moderate, controlled capitalism. Thus on the basis of socialized or controlled heavy industries, individualist and restrictedly liberal finished goods and service industries will be erected and, as a whole, managed on traditional economic lines.

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The main problem remains: is the state adequately prepared to manipulate economy within the pattern described above and partly developed during the last twenty years throughout the world? The deficiency of Keynes's (and other economists') reasoning is the lack of a clear investment program. It is true that, if private initiative becomes unwilling or unable adequately to invest, the body politic has to undertake this decisive function of economic activity. The question, however, is not whether or not to invest—repairing depreciation and increasing capital will always remain the most important task of an economy—but *when* and *in what* to invest. The right selection of capital investments will determine the effectiveness of state management. The state, when it levies heavier taxes to supply by public spending and investment economic functions formerly performed by private enterprise and individual initiative, has to avoid allowing its capital goods to fall into disrepair and must be prepared to meet the economic demands and necessities of the population more adequately than a liberal economy. If the state introduces compulsory saving by taxation and by anticipating credit, its only justification would be in a greater economic aptitude and a juster distribution of the social product.

If the investment authority advocated by Keynes and nowadays employed by every government in the world should inorganically change the production set-up of the former period, thus disrupting large sectors of economic life, frictions of unprecedented seriousness must arise, and the result will be worse than in a pure capitalistic economy with its inevitable waste of investments.

The traditions of the modern state involve, in this regard, a very unfortunate and dangerous tendency. Until the Great War the economic work of modern state administration has been restricted to spending on things which are not directly productive: on defense, internal security, education of the population, and the representative framework of government. The burdens involved in these expenditures constituted the *overhead* expenses of the national economy, in their economic effect comparable to the outlays for the general administration of a corporation. If the state is now entrusted with a great section of the national investment, and collects the financial means adequate for the new function, and still follows the worn-out paths of its tradition of economic administration, it will simply increase the above-mentioned overhead expenses to a serious extent. The unemployment and investment problem—which are approximately the same—can perhaps be temporarily solved by piling up defenses and state buildings, but only at the expense of the living standard of the population and by bringing severe frictions within the whole structure of industry, the production program of which would have to be totally changed, since these measures would involve writing off large parts of the industrial capacity and creating new capital goods to be used only for the movement.

It is obvious that, under these circumstances, the turn from a private to a public investment policy has no decisive advantages for the bulk of the population. The state practise regarding investments will consequently have to follow approximately the lines of private investments which it has to replace. If private initiative is, as it has been since 1930, unable to satisfy, e.g., the housing demands of the population, the state must fulfil these demands. It would be a misconception of public investment policy if the sums, formerly saved for housing purposes, and now taxed away by the state, were to go to the support of the representative framework of the state, leaving the housing market to its destiny. If private enterprise proves unable to exploit new technical inventions, the state may be entrusted with this task, but a fair economic progress cannot be expected if the state spends the money taxed or loaned for this purpose on other items.

TO SUM up: the investor state has to provide for the individual demands of the population which were previously met by individual initiative. If the investing government claims it is compelled to replace the failing individual economy, it is obligated to satisfy the whole complex of wants whose satisfaction has become an impossible job for the receding private economy. The present form of investment administration may be far from the ideal of the economic state. But the world is not committed to the traditional form of capitalism, and the new economic theories may prove, in the long run, more fruitful than those of the last few generations.

A well-organized building program, as far as possible decentralized, could give the new type of state economy a very promising start. Despite the low short-term money rates and the easy money market, the long-term rates are still much too high and a genuine obstacle to a revival of the building industry which holds the key position in industry and trade. House building is the great reserve which might create the first and solid boom of the publicly manipulated industry. Because long-term interest represents 60 to 70 percent of the running costs of housing—the remainder going to administration, repairs and depreciation—a decrease of these rates could immensely stimulate demand and thereby production. At present, capital for housing costs an average of 6 to 7 percent. If only houses of smaller size are constructed, which involve relatively low risks, the interest rate could be decreased to an average of 4 percent. That means lowering the interest costs by more than one-third, and the total hous-

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ing cost by one-fifth to one-fourth. The number of new applicants for those houses would probably increase by more than 100 percent. If it were possible at the same time to flatten the great differentiations in wage rates and to lower certain wage scales in the sheltered industries which are now defended at the expense of long period unemployment, the revival of the key industries could be even more stimulating. As more than 10,000,000 citizens of this country are living in unfit apartments and houses, the program provides for a long-term reconstruction, if—which is decisive—the investment policy of the state is to promote aims destined to raise the general standard of living and to refrain from following the traditional ways of government spending, developed during the epoch of the liberal, non-economic state.

If similar investments are selected in other fields, and the state investment program is carefully adapted to the traditional structure of economy and the current demands of the population—which does not exclude a gradual economic education of the people—the worst dangers of state economy may be avoided: centralization, over-concentration, and large-scale capital waste. These would be the inevitable results of a too bureaucratic management of state economy, which can only prove its superiority if it succeeds in decentralizing the economic activities and creating self-administrative bodies of high responsibility, an achievement quite alien to ordinary bureaucracy. The future belongs to *autonomous economic bodies,* under the control of the state, which combine to the advantage of private initiative and state planning. If the grave responsibility inherent in economic planning is lost sight of, the critics of public economy will be right in condemning an economic system which collects taxes and expands public credits with the excuse of capitalistic inefficiency, but without raising the standard of living and improving the distribution of the national income.

Up to now, modern state economy, nothing new but only a revised and enlarged edition of Mercantilism, a Neo-Mercantilism, has not fully stood the test. But the necessity of solving the unemployment problem, the breakdown of the expansive elements of capitalism, the permanently depressed world markets, and the overshadowing of practically all important economic issues by general politics, leaves no other choice than to seek new ways and means in economics. A return to the economic past is impossible, and the hope of economic progress is crystallizing in the possibility that the intellectual and moral forces of the new generation of leaders of a public or semi-public economy may themselves grow with the growing importance of their functions.

The Contented Guinea Pig

By T. SWANN HARDING

YOU MAY have noticed a special display in your favorite drug store window recently. Among the goods shown, you also observed a large-scale facsimile of a full-page advertisement from the *Cosmopolitan* magazine entitled "Who's a Guinea Pig?" If so, you have seen a contestant or entrant doing what he could to win a prize offered by the *American Druggist* in its October, 1938, issue.

For the *American Druggist* got up a $20,000 prize window-display contest. Druggists were to make up their window as they wished, but they must include the full-page advertisement mentioned above which the *American Druggist* originally placed in *Cosmopolitan* itself. Druggists could secure an enlargement of this fine page free. Prizes were zoned and ranged from $250 down (payable in merchandise) depending on the number of products shown in the window.

The advertisement "Who's a Guinea Pig?" depicted an attractive woman who declared that she was perfectly sure about the quality of the products she bought for they were backed by well-known reputations. She never took a chance. She said: "Despite sensational, destructive propaganda, I know, for example, that when I buy nationally known drug products I don't have to wonder about their quality, purity, and ability to give me my money's worth in satisfaction."

The lady continued that real guinea pigs experiment around with products that are not backed by a well-known house. This contradicts scientific experience of course. For scientists experiment with guinea pigs which are themselves strangely placid animals given to do little but chew contentedly upon carrots and look vaguely bewildered.

The lady depicted knew, however, that exact methods and precise tests made all her drugs and cosmetics dependable. She knew that she paid no more for them than for other, presumably unadvertised and unnamed, products. She ran no risks because the manufacturer who advertises nationally is to be trusted. He constantly maintains a high standard of quality and service. He upholds his good name. So she avoided bargains and stuck to regularly advertised brands.

What, then, did she buy? The advertisement ends with a considerable list of well-known, na-

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tionally advertised products. These are the ones the lady found always honest, pure, dependable and always truthfully advertised and living up to the highest standards. What were they? I cannot mention them all for that would take too much space. Suppose we concentrate on a few of them, examining them just as briefly as possible to determine the manner in which they justified the wise lady's confidence.

Absorbine Jr.: Once recommended for goiter, rheumatism, elephantiasis and varicose veins, for which it had little more specific therapeutic value than it has for athlete's foot—a complex and baffling disease difficult for the best dermatologists to treat successfully. Self-medication of these diseases is not advisable. There are dozens of "cures" for athlete's foot just because there is no cure. The product consists according to Dr. Charles Solomon, M.D. ("Traffic in Health"), of oils of wormwood and sassafras, menthol and acetone. The *Journal of the American Medical Association* (hereafter *J.A.M.A.*) for October 25, 1913, said of this product: "If Absorbine Jr. were put on the market under a nonproprietary name and truthfully exploited, there would be very little of it sold. But enveloped in the mystery of secrecy and advertised under claims that are preposterously exaggerated it, no doubt, is a money-maker."

Alka-Seltzer: Was discussed in the Bureau of Investigation section of the *J.A.M.A.* for November 12, 1932. A person who followed the printed directions and took 16 tablets a day "would consume over 70 grains of aspirin and over 6 grains of salicylic acid in that period." Aspirin is far from harmless and can produce alarming symptoms in many instances. Yet the advertising led users to suppose that the product was a simple effervescent tablet, somewhat alkaline, and containing no strong drugs. It had no ability, as advertised, to alkalinize, to provide vital alkaline minerals, to aid colds, headaches and sour stomach.

Bromo-Seltzer: Records of bromide intoxication from use of this proprietary are quite common in medical history. The product also contains the habit-forming drug acetanilid and was further denounced for that reason by Charles Solomon, M.D., page 121 of his "Traffic in Health." The drug has many characteristics of a narcotic. Dr. J. Frank Waugh reported upon the dangerous character of this popular proprietary in the *J.A.M.A.* for May 17, 1924. He said both adverse bromide reactions and acetanilid poisonings were common from its use.

Bayer's Aspirin: Discussed fully in a report of the Council on Pharmacy and Chemistry of the American Medical Association in the *J.A.M.A.* for March 13, 1935. Shown to be over-recommended, exorbitantly priced, no better than any other pure aspirin. The ills that aspirin of any kind can easily cause were discussed by Drs. Prickman and Buchstein in the *J.A.M.A.* for February 6, 1937. In the London *Lancet* for November 26, 1938, Drs. Douthwaite and Lintott report that aspirin practically always acts as a stomach irritant, often producing an extreme inflammatory reaction, sometimes hemorrhage. The Federal Trade Commission on September 18, 1934, announced action against the false and misleading advertisements of Bayer Aspirin which is, per se, i.e., as aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid), no worse nor better than any other brands.

Feen-A-Mint: This product contains phenolphthalein. Doctors in general believe this drug can be harmful to the kidneys though there is some dispute of this. In its Bureau of Investigation section the *J.A.M.A.* for April 29, 1933, issued a warning against the drug as a public health menace in self-administered candy cathartics. This reinforced a warning of the Food and Drug Administration issued April 11 that year. Dr. Ben A. Newman discussed the dangers of phenolphthalein intoxication in the *J.A.M.A.* of September 2 ,1933.

Fitch Dandruff Remover: Dandruff is an incompletely understood condition. There are no sure cures nor sure removers. Remember this also in connection with Listerine.

Fletcher's Castoria: This is one of the relatively few true patent medicines of known formula. It is a mild laxative preparation of no great harmful potentiality. But the constant advertising of its makers that seeks to persuade mothers to give young children and infants the preparation every time they complain of a wide variety of symptoms is most objectionable.

Scott's Emulsion: This is a cod-liver oil product which, on a basis of vitamin and oil content, is only a fraction as potent as the straight cod-liver oil which it would be more economical to take. If one can afford to pay more for a more palatable preparation, well and good. Do consumers in general know this is what it amounts to?

SIROIL: This is one of the many, many remedies suggested by doctors and patent medicine men for that complex and baffling ailment of the skin, psoriasis. Its advertising has been most objectionable. The ailment is one of the most intractable the dermatologist confronts. Siroil was denounced by the *J.A.M.A.* Bureau of Investigation in the July 27, 1935, issue. It consisted of an emulsion of 16 parts mineral oil, 3 of water, and small quantities of glycerine, salt, carbolic acid, beeswax, etc. As usual the advertising portrayed the product as a great scientific discovery. It is a common formula of no outstanding merit. On February 11, 1939, the Federal Trade Commission announced action against the false adver-

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tising of Siroil as a dandruff remover, a cure or remedy for dandruff or for psoriasis, or to clear up psoriasis lesions or cause skin sores or blotches to disappear permanently, and for other lesser claims.

Scholl's Corn Plasters, etc.: The Federal Trade Commission held Scholl's Zino pads for corns recommended in advertising in an untruthful and unwarranted manner as a new discovery, the greatest for ending corn pain. That was December 29, 1933. The main ingredient of the product was salicylic acid, used for many years by many manufacturers in corn cures. The firm's advertisements were consistently false and misleading until this action curbed the abuse.

Johnson & Johnson's products: Recent investigation by the Food and Drug Administration disclosed that most absorbent cottons and gauzes manufactured in the United States were sterilized *before* in lieu *after* packaging; hence they were usually contaminated with harmful germs. Oddly enough the products J. & J. put out under the firm name were of high grade but those put out under the name Seabury, their wholly owned subsidiary, required action by the government to end germ contamination.

Kotex: It was announced in the *J.A.M.A.* for January 17, 1931, that the association's laboratories found these articles contained no substance that could be considered of value as an antiseptic or deodorant in the quantity present. Yet the product was then advertised as odor-proof because it contained a mild, pure, safe antiseptic.

Listerine Antiseptic: The *J.A.M.A.* for November 14, 1931, spoke of this as "bottled psychotherapy," and said "diluted Listerine is no more bactericidal than water. . . . Even full strength Listerine is an exceedingly weak germicide." Tests reported in the *J.A.M.A.* for January 23, 1937, by Robert N. Nye, show it had little true antiseptic property. In the *J.A.M.A.* for July 4, 1925, our leading pharmacologist, Torald Sollmann, was quoted as saying that $495 of Listerine has the antiseptic action of 1c worth of corrosive sublimate, or $15 worth of Listerine equals 1c worth of carbolic acid. Listerine possesses as much antiseptic power as the average mouthwash or mouth cosmetic. But claims for it as a general remedy for halitosis, body odor, and dandruff, and that it slays germs and thus prevents very serious respiratory and other ailments, are quite unwarranted.

Calox Tooth Powder: Not admitted to "accepted dental remedies" by the American Dental Association because it was unnecessarily complex in formula and was dishonestly advertised. It was in no sense the new and amazing discovery claimed. It was based on the old idea that lime water neutralizes mouth acids. The sodium perborate it contained was not, as claimed, efficacious in trench mouth. It would not magically remove stains and whiten teeth as claimed. It was neither the "perfect" nor the "scientifically prepared 5-way dentifrice" claimed. The full report will be found in the *Journal of the American Dental Association* for January, 1935.

Ipana: Denounced by the American Dental Association in its *Journal* of December, 1934, for false and misleading advertising claims about such things as 4 out of 5, film, acid mouth, more than a tooth paste, pink tooth brush and its content of Ziratol—a patent medicine of undeclared composition. The dental council refused to accept the product. Neither, incidentally, would it accept Pepsodent, Kolynos, Pebeco, or Squibb dental creams. It did accept Iodent because now, after a past career of false claims, it was recommended only as an aid in keeping the teeth clean. Ephraim Dental Cream was accepted for the same reason. June 29, 1937, the Federal Trade Commission ordered the Bristol-Myers Co. to cease representing that the use of its Ipana with a gum massage would prevent one from becoming a "dental cripple."

We shall not further pursue the list appended to the advertisement. We may wonder why the lady who was not a guinea pig felt she was so fully protected by the nationally known manufacturers who have so flagrantly exaggerated the character of their products. Why did she feel that she ran no risks in the face of so much false and misleading advertising? What about those "high standards of quality and service" about which she was so sure? Have the manufacturers upheld their "good names"?

The lady said she never took a chance! It is to laugh. She avoided bargains and sought out only nationally known products, regularly advertised brands. Thus she saved money, or did she? In conclusion let us look into that question briefly.

Not long ago one of the advertisements of Macy's department store in New York covered a list of so-called medicine-cabinet necessities. Assuming they are necessary—and many people, of whom the present writer is one, rarely have use for a tenth of them—Macy's own brand (fulfilling U. S. Pharmacopeia standards like any other) would cost the purchaser only $6.29. On the same day price-fixed and nationally advertised articles of the same quality and in the same quantity would have cost the consumer $12.50. These were the private brands. This is rather a wide disparity in price to pay for names, words.

Chemically the articles were the same in one case as in the other. They were described as all well made, of pure ingredients, and with great care. The label claims of the private brands went a little further usually.

By now the guinea pig lady is invited to announce her conclusions. After that — class dismissed!

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A Censor of His Age[1]

By CHARLES P. BRUEHL

TO OVERCOME their apathy in the presence of evil and to arouse them from their supine and stolid acceptance of injustice in the world around them, men have been endowed with the capacity for moral indignation which, when called into play, brushes aside cowardly hesitation and silences the objections of selfish caution. Always in the course of history men in whose breasts glows a consuming hatred of wrong have arisen and endeavored to kindle in the more sluggish hearts of their fellowmen a similar flame. In the fire of moral indignation the world must be purified of its abuses and injustices. The prophet of wrath, therefore, is indispensable in a world always ready to compromise with evil.

It is in the rôle of such a prophet that Mr. Bernanos appears before us. An exceptionally harassing emotional experience, as he tells us himself, has produced in his mind a violent revulsion of sentiment: "The spectacle of injustice shatters me" (page 95). This frank statement at once explains the temper of the book and indicates where we must look for its possible shortcomings. We are reading an indictment written under great emotional stress and such a presentation will naturally have, as the Frenchman so well says, the defects of its qualities. Emotion renders vision keen and myopic but it distorts the perspective that gives to the objects their proper place and setting.

The title of the original, "Great Cemeteries under the Moon," is more illuminating than that of the translation and suggests the particular event which has so deeply touched the author's soul and alienated his sympathies from the Nationalist movement. Living in Majorca at the outbreak of the Spanish counter-revolution he has seen piled up in the cemeteries of the neighborhood the corpses of thousands who were slain by the Insurgents. In his estimation these killings were unjustified yet officially sanctioned and even winked at by the clergy of Nationalist Spain. His chief grievance is that the campaign of the Nationalists has been dignified by the name of a Crusade or Holy War.

We are justified in applying to the assertions made by Mr. Bernanos the principles of inner criticism which judges a document by its own inherent character. Viewed from this angle the general impression cannot but be unfavorable. Testimony delivered in the manner of Mr. Bernanos can impossibly inspire confidence; its credibility is seriously damaged by the uncontrolled and passionate vehemence of its utterances. Its tenor is not that of an objective report of facts. For all that, the sincerity of the man need not be impugned, for the wrath born in his breast may have beclouded his vision and led him to see things out of focus and grotesquely exaggerated. At all events, on the strength of the author's unsupported testimony I would not dare to formulate a final verdict. The laws of internal evidence compel reserve. Still, knowing human nature, I am prepared to admit that what Mr. Bernanos reports has a broad factual basis, nor have we as Catholics any reason to deny facts in connection with the Spanish insurrection that are sufficiently authenticated.

Surely I never heard of a war in which ugly disorders did not occur. It would be folly to claim an exception for the present civil war going on in Spain. But I must repudiate the charge that the Spanish hierarchy and clergy complacently looked on these horrors and connived at them. Meanwhile the Archbishop of Majorca has solemnly declared that whenever a case of harsh treatment or injustice came to his notice, he energetically protested and this usually with good effect. Now, in spite of the vilification to which Mr. Bernanos subjects this prelate, to whom he refers only in sneering and abusive terms, the word of a bishop does carry some weight with unprejudiced men. On the other hand, the fact that priests ministered to the spiritual needs of the victims of Nationalist persecution does not imply that they condoned any wrong associated with the executions.

Mr. Bernanos insinuates that compliance with religious duties has been made a test of political loyalty. Whatever there may be to this charge, it is hard to believe that the parish clergy could be partners to such perfidy. That a military régime might adopt such a procedure is not beyond the range of possibility. If it has been done, it is utterly abhorrent to Catholic sentiment according to which conscience is a sanctuary that may not be invaded by any power, and religious observance must be free from external compulsion. Sadly Cardinal Goma y Toma says in a message addressed to the Spanish faithful:

> Will the spiritual reactions in our country be at least some compensation for the destitution that has befallen the Church? Nor is this spiritual reaction a bright point in the situation, if we must read the facts that happen under our very noses. Well may one ask where the Church can truly rely on real

[1] A Diary of My Times, by Georges Bernanos. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

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> friendship, now that in some districts it is dangerous to adopt a different attitude [quoted from the *Tablet*, September 17, 1938].

Even if we grant the essential justice of the Nationalist uprising, that would nowise commit us to an approval of the manner in which the campaign has been conducted. The Holy Father himself pleaded with the responsible military leaders for humane methods, and quite recently after the fall of Barcelona urgently asked the conquerors to abstain from reprisals. To maintain that the Nationalists can do no wrong is an untenable position into which Catholics must not allow themselves to be maneuvered. As a matter of fact His Eminence in the message mentioned above continues as follows:

> Our fears are not unfounded, for war, even war waged under the highest inspiration and with the loftiest ideals, is but a poor guardian of virtue. No doubt examples of patriotism, heroism and Christian virtue are frequent on the battlefield. But war also breeds lower instincts, and a protracted experience of blood and misery never goes without spiritual damage.

Erroneously it might be supposed that Mr. Bernanos is pro-Loyalist in his sympathies. He is neither in favor of the Loyalist government nor is he absolutely against the use of force. He would be on the side of the Nationalists but for the excesses of which he was the witness at close range. His quarrel is with the members of the Spanish hierarchy and clergy who have identified themselves with the Nationalist movement and given it their moral support, without which in his opinion it would long since have completely collapsed. He sees in the attitude of these ecclesiastics an unworthy compromise. Compromise it is. But is it not a necessary, inescapable compromise? Plainly this is not a question of doctrine nor of internal spiritual administration but one of prudence and policy which admits of discussion. It would have to be decided on a factual basis on which it is notoriously difficult to attain to an agreement.

The condition of the Spanish Church under the Republic of 1931 was most precarious, yet whilst strenuously opposing anti-religious legislation the hierarchy accepted the established government in conformity with the traditions of Catholic philosophy which sanctions revolution and war only as a last resort. This is particularly evident in the Mexican situation in which Catholics in spite of persecution did not have recourse to armed insurrection. The Spanish hierarchy no doubt contemplated a like course of reconciliation. The military uprising was not of the Church's making. Later developments convinced the majority of the religious leaders that no modus vivendi could be established with the de facto government and they felt compelled to cast their lot with the Nationalist forces who seemed to represent the best national traditions, whereas the existing government took on a foreign complexion and became overtly hostile to religion. True, this is a simplified version, for unquestionably a number of other factors enter into the situation.

We may assume that the hierarchy at this stage was still encouraging pacification, but all prospects in this regard faded. Even at this moment a peace of conciliation is only a remote possibility. Alliance with any part of a nation against another part is certainly not a desirable thing in the eyes of the Church but it may become a tragic necessity, the choice of a lesser evil. Revolution stands out as an awful alternative, yet may it not be preferable to overthrow a government even at the cost of bloodshed and devastation than to hand over coming generations to religious oppression and moral corruption? In this connection a quotation from a review of a recent pacifist book seems very pertinent. It reads:

> On the other hand he [Humphrey Beevor, "Peace and Pacifism"] is too pacifist in holding that all modern wars must be unjustifiable. All wars for secular and national ends must indeed be condemned, as certainly producing more evil than any possible good they could effect. This, however, does not apply to war waged to preserve the souls of the people from atheism or anti-Christian pseudo-religion imposed by a persecuting state. Better that our children should be killed, than brought up in ignorance or hatred of God. And, in fact, there is at this moment a war justifiable for this reason, namely, General Franco's revolt against the Red persecution. We must, it is true, condemn certain of the methods he has employed, as illegitimate in any war [E. I. W., in *Colosseum*, October, 1938].

OF COMPROMISE of any kind Mr. Bernanos will not hear. He fails to see that the Church in carrying out her mission must use human instruments which may act contrary to her intentions and actually discredit her. He forgets that the Church is for men, which means for sinners, few of whom will rise to the height of heroism. As a society the Church exists very often in an unfavorable political environment, to which for the sake of the faithful she must adapt herself. This cannot be accomplished without compromise or what the writer scornfully calls *accomodements*. The bargain into which the Church under such circumstances is compelled to enter may not always be the best. Political arrangements accepted by the Church to secure peace for the faithful have at times proved exceedingly embarrassing but under existing conditions seemed the only course to escape greater evil. Against such a prudential choice Mr. Bernanos fulminates in the most violent language. He has no use for what he derisively terms "General Lesser-Evil," to whom he accuses the Spanish clergy of having surrendered and with whom in his opinion the Church on the

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whole is all too willing to enter into an alliance. Still, in reality life is such that we are frequently placed before the alternative of choosing between two evils.

Mr. Bernanos would have us apply to all problems the undiluted doctrine of the New Testament which, as he sees it, always furnishes absolute decisions that can be expressed in an unqualified and clear-cut "Yes" or "No." True, the New Testament supplies principles, but their application to concrete cases not seldom bristles with difficulties and leaves a wide margin for differences of opinion. The concrete application of the principles is even fraught with the tragic possibility of error, for human prudence is not infallible. Yet we have no other, and the choice is sometimes inevitable, so that a merely negative attitude would be impractical. To the trials of the loyal son of the Church belongs also that his confidence in the administrative measures of his ecclesiastical superiors be tested, and at times the strain may become severe. If in matters of this type not belonging to the doctrinal and moral sphere he cannot bring himself to see eye to eye with them, this must not diminish his respect for their authority nor make him indulge in irreverent criticism that would lend comfort to the enemies of the Church. Nor must anyone be too ready to prefer his own judgment to that of the proper authorities. The wise man distrusts his judgment and remains ever willing to revise the thought processes by which he has arrived at a conclusion. In this connection, however, tormenting conflicts of conscience may arise as they did in the case of the author. That is the opinion of Father Pie Duploye, O.P., set forth in *La Vie Intellectuelle* ápropos of a criticism of Mr. Bernanos's work (June, 1938).

In the *Month,* November, 1938, Father James Brodrick, S.J., draws an intriguing and instructive parallel between Mr. Bernanos and Tertullian. The resemblance in many ways is striking. True, the turbulent Tertullian sank into the dreary morass of Montanism, but patristic literature is richer for his writings. Neither would we want to miss the book of the Prophet of Majorca. It contains passages which breathe the purest spirit of the Gospels and blow into the foul atmosphere of our age like refreshing breezes of spring. Some of these utterances ring out like trumpet blasts calling to highest endeavor. But what of human frailty? It trembles before such awful pronouncements which demand an unfaltering "heroism without which a Christian is no more than a hog" (page 198). Mr. Bernanos's disgust with the average Christian is fine, but has he not heard of the "smoking flax" which the Saviour will not extinguish?

The concern of the Church for the miserably struggling average Christian is not a betrayal of the ideals of the Gospel. It is not weakness but the outcome of her maternal love, and the Church preeminently is a Mother. After all, life does not, as Mr. Bernanos would have us believe, present absolute contrasts between good and bad, black and white; these merely appear in various degrees of admixture. It is impossible to accept the division of mankind into the stupid and the men of honor, especially not when we notice that the author puts the great bulk of humanity in the former category leaving hardly more than a baker's dozen for the second.

His hatred of compromise makes the author flay the members of the Spanish clergy who have espoused the Nationalist cause as cowardly temporizers who place themselves cautiously on the side of success. The fictitious discourses in justification of their policy which he puts on their lips mark them as opportunists of the most unscrupulous kind and as craven exponents of the doctrine of Machiavellian expediency and duplicity. It is not necessary to defend the clergy against such a wholesale charge. These tirades overshoot the mark. The oily and slimy creatures in cassocks moving about in the pages of the book will be readily recognized as caricatures that have no counterpart in reality. Only a prejudiced eye will regard them as faithful portraits of the clergy.

If we gage Mr. Bernanos's sentiments correctly, he has not meant to write a book against the Church, and this may be the reason why his violent denunciations of churchmen have not been fully exploited in an unfriendly sense. On the other hand, it is not yet apparent whether he has rendered the Church a service by the publication of this strange volume in spite of the inspiring passages which it contains. On the constructive side the book is rather weak and offers only the vaguest generalities for, if it advocates "the war of men of good-will," we are left completely in the dark as to the nature of the warfare and as to who these good men are. On the author's own showing the number of these men of good-will is discouragingly small and no criterion is given by which they might be identified; we do not know who comes under this class, outside of himself, the old soldiers, for whom like Joseph de Maistre he cherishes the tenderest affection, and the little children.

All the reviewers agree that, whilst his denunciations are explicit enough, his affirmative positions are hard to discover. Of the claim which the publishers make in behalf of the book "that to that great crowd of intelligent men and women who want to find some middle ground between Fascism and Communism, it gives a clear and eloquent response," Mr. Justin O'Brien in the *Partisan Review* (Fall, 1938) says: "This the book emphatically does not do." But not only "will one find it difficult to restate precisely Bernanos's social, political and economic views,"

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as Mr. George Shuster aptly remarks in the New York *Herald Tribune Books* (December 11, 1938), on closer scrutiny it even turns out a formidable task to point out his aversions for he is anti-nationalist, anti-fascist and anti-democratic to boot. He really is fighting on too many fronts.

On the whole, Catholic critics have been rather friendly, showing much respect for the subjectively righteous anger of the author but also stressing the fact that his zeal is marred by inordinate self-confidence and lack of restraint. The Catholic senses in Bernanos a conscience sorely tried, a heart deeply wounded and a mind puzzled by a perplexing situation. Such a state of mind calls for an understanding and sympathetic approach. Mr. Bernanos is battling sincerely against doubts which have assailed the peace of his mind, and he is groping for an insight which eludes him. Such an experience may come to any reflecting Catholic who grapples with the problems of his days. The case of Mr. Bernanos is hardly an isolated one but rather typical of many whose mental assurance of the righteousness of things has been shaken by happenings which they cannot reconcile with their religious and moral convictions. Mere repression is not advisable and so it may be good that these perplexities of troubled and bewildered minds have become articulate through the voice of the author of "A Diary of My Times," who reveals a situation that deserves careful attention, for doubts cannot be beaten down but must be rationally solved and mental perplexities must be ironed out.

This opens up an interesting field for the cultivation of which Catholic Action supplies the appropriate machinery, since the closer contact between clergy and laity which Catholic Action intends to promote will also bring about a fuller mutual understanding and a heartier cooperation. The Church does not discourage thinking because she does not fear the truth, and it is the purpose of Catholic Action to make the thought of the laity as well as their external activity contributory to the spread of the Faith. Scientific research is also a form of Divine service. Let the lay scientist or historian work arduously in his chosen field and bring to the altar the sheaves which he has garnered. No irksome restrictions will hamper his labors. But the Christian thinker must be fully conscious of his great responsibility, devote himself to ceaseless inquiry, maintain a scrupulous vigilance over his conclusions, be reasonably diffident of his own judgment and defer to the constituted doctrinal authorities in the sphere in which they alone are competent.

No alarm need be felt concerning Mr. Bernanos's book. Kindly and facetiously, Father Joseph McSorley, C.S.P., observes anent his impassioned denunciations, "His bark is probably worse than his bite" (the *Catholic World,* January, 1939). Quite so. But the bark may awaken some who are too unconcernedly slumbering.

Christianity in the CCC

By PAUL REVERE WADDELL

"WHO IS Jesus Christ?" I asked of a youth in a CCC camp class. The boy stared at me, puzzled for the moment. His face lighted suddenly.

"Christ was a great man, like Napoleon," he said.

"Is that all?"

"It's all I know."

I asked the other nineteen boys in the class if any of them cared to add to what their friend had said. They looked at me with blank faces and were silent.

TWICE a week an army car calls at the University of Notre Dame and takes me to the local CCC camp—thirty minutes drive from the campus. I teach "practical" subjects—advertising, journalism, salesmanship. But often I wonder about the souls of the young men entrusted to my wisdom, and ask them questions that involve their God-consciousness. The students range in age from sixteen to twenty-five.

I wrote five words on the blackboard one night, and told them to write what they knew about each —God, man, morality, life, death.

Of twenty papers, three left blank spaces for the word God. Five gave sound answers. The remaining twelve had fragmentary notions of the Supreme Being. They could describe His acts, but were totally unable to define Him as a personal God.

> God is a creature of the old world. He had twelve apostles.
>
> God is that being who created the sun, moon and stars.
>
> God is the creator of all religions.
>
> I figure God is a person who is with us always if we believe in him.
>
> God is the man the Jews crucified.
>
> God is the one who is spoken of in the Holy Book.

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God is the last resort in which we place our faith when in trouble.

God is the dictator of all the world.

God is someone who died for us.

God is the most powerful man who ever lived.

God is the person to pray to when we are in trouble.

Ten had an idea of man. Ten left blank spaces. It is significant that the word "soul" is found in but three answers.

Man is a being with a mind he is able to use by himself.

Man is a mammal and a human being with personal knowledge.

Man is a being who has brains more developed than other animals.

Man is the smartest of all animals in the world.

A man is a body that has brains.

A man is a person with a soul.

Man is a highly developed ape.

Man is a being with an intelligence far above the animals.

Man is an animal composed of body and soul.

Man is an animal created by God to his own likeness. He has a soul, and an animal hasn't a soul.

Seventeen could not describe, let alone define morality. Three contented themselves with the statement: "The Ten Commandments."

Life had a meaning for eleven of the class. It may have had a meaning for the other nine, but they could not express it.

Life is the fact that a being is living.

Life is living till it stops, then death begins.

Life is just a hard knock, and when you get a bad break you've got to keep your chin up.

Life is anything that is alive.

Life is that period in which a man is born and fights to make a place for himself and achieve happiness.

Life is the future one looks forward to.

Life is the cooperation of body and soul performing its duties.

Life is that period between birth and death.

Life is the trial that tests what a man is worth.

Life is what every man on earth has.

Life is a gift that God gives us to find out how much we love Him.

Death meant nothing more than the cessation of physical activity to most of them. Had I accused them of being materialists, they would not have understood.

Death is when life leaves the body.

Death is life after it has gone.

Death is something that comes in the course of life.

Death is the last thing you meet in your living career.

Death is the end of life on this earth.

Death is when your soul leaves your body.

Death is the absence of life.

Death is the end of everything.

Pascal said: "Apart from Christ we know neither what our life nor what our death is; we do not know what God is nor what we ourselves are." Even Dostoievsky, the Eastern Orthodoxist, remarked in his sketch for "The Young Man": "I have never been able to conceive mankind without Him."

Yet these youths represent a mankind without Christ. He is the Reality they lack. Without Him, God, man, morality, life and death are meaningless; with Him these words take on eternal meaning and power.

What chance will these boys have of learning of Christ and His Church? Judging by what I have seen, their chance is negligible. Despite the fact that one-third of my class was Catholic—and as lacking as the other two-thirds in knowledge of their faith—I have never seen a priest in this camp. An army minister-chaplain calls monthly, tells the boys a few jokes, and warns them about the women in the town. But he seems more set on impressing them with his good fellowship than imbuing them with any eternal truths to live by. The boys can go to church Sundays. An army truck drives into the city and deposits them for services. A straggling few make the trip.

The Catholics told me frankly that they had lost interest in "church-going" since they were on their own. One boy summarized their attitude:

"Religion is all right at home. I guess it's okay for college fellows. They have it soft. But out here you have to be tough to get along, and the church business doesn't help none. We just outgrow it."

This falling away in belief has its inevitable effect upon conduct. The boys' visits to prostitutes are as predictable as pay day. Prophylactics —three for fifteen cents—are displayed and sold at the commissary.

I pointed out to them the moral and social evils of promiscuity.

"Five bucks we get out of a month's pay. What would you do—go to a show?"

The Christless condition found in this CCC camp has a warning for Protestants as well as Catholics. For this youth which we now lament not knowing God, will not tomorrow admit His existence.

What is their destiny and their children's destiny? What is the meaning of their lives without the Supreme Reality? "There is no other name under heaven, given to man, whereby we must be saved" (Acts, iv, 12) but the name of Jesus Christ.

It is a question and a challenge.

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Points & Lines

Farm Lights and Shadows

THE PERSISTENCE of major crop surpluses and depressed commodity prices is indicated in the current *Agricultural Situation,* which is published by the Department of Agriculture:

> At present world rates of consumption it was indicated that the world carry-over of wheat and cotton next July and August would be the largest on record—the world carry-over of wheat amounting to 1.2 billion bushels, and of cotton approximately 25 million bales.

The panaceas now under advisement are indicated in *Business Week:*

> Two or three different plans of boosting consumption of food surpluses probably will be tried out in different parts of the country, but Secretary Wallace's staff isn't ready yet to go overboard on any scheme. For one thing, the Commerce Department's interest in this project will deter fast action by Wallace's men. Secretary Hopkins hasn't yet stuck his thumb in the pie, but department officials have been contacting trade representatives and have been discussing various angles of the situation with Wallace's group.

The administration is not hoping for much help from foreign markets generally according to the *Agricultural Situation:*

> The foreign situation continues to be unfavorable for United States agriculture. Political uncertainties continue to exert a heavy pressure on general industrial activity in foreign countries, which thus far has given little evidence of following the recovery movement in the United States. Exports of farm products during the last few months have been materially lower than a year earlier.

But the possibilities of wheat purchases from one new quarter are presented in an Associated Press dispatch:

> A new $23,000,000-a-year customer for Middle Western farmers is considered a definite possibility in Wall Street. This prospective customer is Brazil, whose Foreign Minister, Dr. Oswaldo Aranha, conferred a few days ago in Washington with Secretary of Agriculture Wallace. Brazil, the world's greatest coffee producer, has to import virtually all the wheat her 40,000,000 inhabitants eat. Most of the wheat she buys comes from Argentina. In 1938 she paid about $22,200,000 to Argentina for wheat and $900,000 more for flour—taking care of just about all the Argentine crop surplus.

Considerable help from another quarter is possible, according to the *Christian Science Monitor:*

> German sources said negotiations were under way for extensvie barter deals between Germany and midwest organizations of farmers and packers. Under such deals, which official American sources said could be handled by non-governmental agencies without any special permit, the farmers and packers might exchange their agricultural goods for German-manufactured articles. The negotiations began, German sources said, when representatives of co-operative farm organizations asked the German commercial attaché in Chicago, a Dr. Fricke, whether a pure barter arrangement could be effected. Shortly thereafter the co-operatives' representatives were said to have come to Washington to see Dr. Wilhelm Tannenberg, first Secretary of the German Embassy. Dr. Tannenberg and Dr. Fricke told them, it was said, Germany would be glad to enter into barter arrangements for lard and wheat, taking several hundred tons of lard and 150,000 tons of wheat. Pure barter is permitted by a regulation of the United States Treasury of December, 1936. It has been used by California fruit growers and Virginia apple growers who exchanged fruit for German fertilizer.

The general prospect for farm commodity prices is soberly set forth in the *Farmer* of St. Paul, Minnesota:

> Basic commodity prices are weak, but are moderately above the extreme 1938 low point. International politics remains a serious threat, further rise in business activity is the logical expectation before the present cycle is completed. Building activity and auto output probably will expand toward spring and will sustain the steel industry.

What this means in terms of purchasing power for our farm families is further indicated by statistics on the farmer's share of the nation's food expenditures. According to the *Agricultural Situation:*

> The farmer's share of the consumer's dollar spent for a representative list of 58 foods in 1938 was the smallest in four years. It amounted to 40 cents, as compared with 45 cents in 1937, with a low of 33 cents in 1932, and an average of 53 cents in 1913-15 when this government compilation was started. The decline of 5 cents in 1938 was the first decline since the drop from 38 cents in 1931 to the 26-year low of 33 cents in 1932.

The hired hands appear to be in no better case in the opinion of the same bulletin.

> Farm employment has declined in the last 30 years despite a marked increase in agricultural production. Approximately 10.7 million farm family and hired workers in 1938 produced 25 to 30 percent more farm products than 12.2 million workers produced in 1909.

These problems came up for discussion at an important Des Moines conference reported in the Baltimore *Sun:*

> Spokesmen for agriculture, labor and industry agreed at the opening sessions of the National Farm Institute here today that only cooperation by all three groups in attacking the nation's major economic problems could preserve the democratic form of government in the United States. The unanimous agreement of speakers on this point, however, disappeared when they moved on to discuss specific ways and means of an economic program.

One of the best farm reports in recent weeks comes from Kansas, where, according to the New York *Times,* a combination of the best soil conservation practises and favorable weather conditions have produced a splendid wheat crop on former dust bowl lands.

> But there was general agreement that the best wheat in the state is to be found in southwestern Kansas, the heart of the so-called dust bowl. Moisture supplies have been more plentiful in that section and widespread use of moisture conservation practises, such as summer fallowing, terracing and contour planting, has served to conserve all the moisture which has fallen.

New discoveries continue to brighten the prospects of the farmer. An instance is given in *Newsweek:*

> A new and inexpensive chemical preservative applied to such crops as alfalfa and timothy will, according to the Monsanton Chemical Co., cause "making hay while the sun shines" to become as out of date as shaking out the lap robe for a buggy ride. The preservative—a form of phosphoric acid—permits drying and curing during the cutting operation. Hay thus preserved may be stored in silos without risking spoilage instead of in barns as at present—thereby making more storage space available. The cows get an

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added break: the preservative furnishes minerals needed in their diet.

Turning to social conditions in agricultural areas we find the editor of the *Farmer's Wife* giving the following advice to anxious parents:

> "Step faster!" we would say to the many parents who write to us to complain about the bad influences in their communities which are harmful to their young people. They condemn roadhouses, dance halls, pool halls, cheap, vulgar story magazines, trashy radio programs and other amusements which are just no good. These fathers and mothers are right when they say that unwholesome diversions make it difficult for boys and girls to walk in the way they should go. . . . As they deal with the problem they must remember that this is a different day than they knew a generation ago. Tick-tack-toe and old mill were good enough fun in the early nineties to satisfy youth through long winter evenings, but they do not fill the bill today. . . . Unless parents keep abreast of changes, there is sure to be trouble in the home and in the community. In our December magazine we presented the story of a southern Michigan community which stepped out and set up a wholesome recreation program that caught the interest of youth and held it against commercial amusements of a dubious nature. That article has many suggestions for your community if it needs to step faster and lead the procession.

Mexico's Lid is Loose

THE ATTEMPT to understand Mexico's deliberately "perpetual" revolution can be made easier by trying to group news reports from below the Rio Grande under the heads of religion, education, economics and political technique. No very recent dispatches point to any important changes along the spotty and still unsatisfactory religious front. The educational problem is closely related to the religious. Toward the beginning of this month, Catholic papers printed a Mexican correspondence supplied by the N.C.W.C.:

> At the convention of the League of Agrarian Communities . . . the delegate from Manzanillo, in the name of all the delegates representing the municipalities of the state of Colima, expressed indignation at the conduct of teachers in the official schools. These teachers, it is charged, neglect their school duties to go about among the rural population causing dissension and making propaganda. Charges of philandering and immorality were made also and the delegate declared the people of Colima want real teachers who will devote their time and attention to educating the children of the community and not political mentors. . . . The appointment of Jose Mancisidor, who is regarded as a "militant Communist," to succeed Enrique Beltran as Chief of the Department of Secondary Education, has aroused protests particularly from the teachers in the secondary schools.

Propaganda, political activity and jockeying for position in anticipation of the presidential election of July, 1940, indicate that the Cardenas régime is not utilizing tyrannous suppression as a political technique. A rally was held in Mexico City on February 19 of the foes of the Cardenas section of the Revolutionary party. This rally had been put off from February 5, because four of the speakers were then temporarily in jail for speeches insulting the President. According to Raymond Daniell, who recently took the place in Mexico of the New York *Times* correspondent who was forced from the country for alleged unfriendliness and unfairness to the administration:

> All the speakers professed devotion to democracy, denounced communism as a national enemy and denied charges of a link to Nazism. Some anti-Semitic literature was distributed and the reference of Bernardino Mena Brito to "Jewish coyotes," and his attack on Dr. Francisco Castilla Najera, Ambassador to Washington, as an "employee of the Jewish synagogues of New York rather than the true Ambassador of Mexico, drew wild shouts of applause from the diners. . . .
>
> The banquet was intended as the opening move to form a nucleus of opposition to the official Mexican Revolutionary party of President Lazaro Cardenas. But the speakers avoided discussion of a possible presidential candidate, saying it would be decided later at a representative convention. . . .
>
> While the speakers all stressed the hope of righting government affairs with the ballot, an undertone of readiness to resort to other methods ran through nearly all the oratory. . . . One general, who was a member of the Carranza Cabinet, told correspondents of United States papers that he was certain "another revolution" was inevitable, but such talk is fairly common in Mexico.

The organization which gave the banquet rally is called the National Anti-Communist party. One general invited to attend was Joaquin Amaro, although the reports of the banquet itself did not mention him as speaking or being there. He and General Almazan are prominently mentioned as prospective anti-administration candidates for the presidency. Another report to the New York *Times* says:

> It is reported unofficially that General Amaro is strongly supported by the followers of the exiled Calles, who is bitterly hated by Catholics for his anti-clerical policies.

Recently the Mexican government confiscated a sugar estate of 30,000 acres said to belong mostly to Calles. General Coss, organizer of the Anti-Communist party, on February 18 defined communism thus:

> "Communism is a social system that Lombardo Toledano [Mexican labor chief] and his aides intend to implant as a result of which there will be no respect for private property and no respect for individual rights."

Concern in the United States with Mexico is now centered on the oil controversy. This is linked up with the whole problem of confiscation in Mexico and in all Latin America, and with the trade inroads of Germany and Italy, and with the imperialistic character of American oil corporations. On February 17 the *Christian Science Monitor* reported:

> A barter deal is now being negotiated between Germany and the Mexican government whereby German military planes would be furnished to the Mexican army in return for shipments of Mexican oil. A Japanese company has contracted to drill a maximum of twenty oil wells yearly on the Mexican Isthmus of Tehuantepec. These developments, learned on good authority, widen still further the gap between the Mexican government and those British and American oil interests whose properties in Mexico have been expropriated. They are taken as evidence that the Mexican government is determined to retain title to the oil and to find outlets in any direction whatsoever.

Speaking of the general threat of German competition in Latin America, an article in *Foreign Affairs* summarizes thus:

> Taking the most recent figures in conjunction with those of 1933 and 1937, we may draw the following conclusions:
>
> The United States has suffered no serious reversals except in Mexico.

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> American goods continue to dominate the markets of Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala and Peru. . . .
>
> The German gains in practically all cases have been made at the expense of the United Kingdom, or some other country, rather than at the expense of the United States.

The New York *Herald Tribune* calls for a firm policy, advocated by nearly all conservative publications. Special articles by Nicholas Roosevelt and Mark Sullivan are backed up by an editorial. Mr. Sullivan considers three possible steps:

> If the United States were to stop its silver buying, the Mexican government would suffer serious diminution of tax revenue. . . . Second, we could lift the embargo on shipment of arms from the United States to Mexico. Such action would give arms to internal Mexican opponents of the present Mexican government. . . . Third, our government could make what diplomacy calls a firm demand. . . . "Firm methods" means, in the final analysis, force.

In fact, the State Department seems to be backing up the oil companies in their negotiations with the Mexican government. The companies have employed Patrick J. Hurley and Donald H. Richberg to go to Mexico for discussions. The actual expropriations were made March 18, 1938, and the question is about compensation, not about the right of expropriation which any sovereign possesses in international law. Dr. Federico Bach, economic adviser to the Mexican government, said in an interview in New York City:

> "Mexico has consistently refused to sign a long-term barter agreement with Germany and Italy because we continued to hope for a settlement with the oil companies. . . . I am confident that a satisfactory compromise with the American companies is not impossible."

It is expected that the Mexican government will retain title to the oil fields and sign a long-term contract with the operating companies, which contract will enforce upon them labor and other arrangements they have not yet lived up to, according to Mexican sources.

Still another, and more sinister, aspect of the oil trouble came up in the courts and in publicity from the Department of Commerce. An independent oil company in Texas won a suit against Royal Dutch, and *Business Week* gives it this significance:

> The case is important because it threatens to put an end to interference of the big oil interests in the free distribution of Mexican oil through independent distributors.

A New York *Times* report of February 17 says the Department of Commerce is preparing a special report on Mexican trade:

> The order for the report was given after some American manufacturers had informed the department that they no longer felt free to sell supplies to Mexico because it might interfere with their domestic business with large American oil companies whose Mexican subsidiaries were expropriated last year. They are said to have expressed fears that their Mexican markets might be permanently lost.

Thus a fight for American oil interests in Mexico seems to be inescapably a fight for monopolistic domestic business, and it is possible that the bugaboo of fascist penetration there, publicized more by conservatives than by radicals, is in the nature of a red herring. It appears inescapable that the quarrel is not a clean and clear two-sided struggle between the two United States.

* * * The *Views and Reviews* column of Michael Williams's will not appear for two weeks. By that time we expect to receive his weekly comments from Rome, where Mr. Williams has gone to cover the papel conclave as a special correspondent for the New York *Times*.

Communications

PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

St. Paul, Minn.

TO the Editors: May I correct a misunderstanding of words of mine on the part of Sister Mary de Lourdes, who writes, in "Education and Escapism" in the January 27 COMMONWEAL, in reference to an article by me published in the issue of November 4: ". . . We dare say that the papal encyclicals on current social problems and the magnitude and urgency of current social problems have nothing to do with the question of curriculum or education. They have everything to do with the question of Christian education . . . etc." The interpolation of a few words into one of my sentences results here in a serious distortion of meaning. I wrote: "Papal encyclicals on current social questions, and the magnitude and urgency of current social problems have . . . nothing to do with the question." The "question," as the context shows, is whether schools ought to depart from the traditional disciplines and emphases, in particular, whether they ought "to emphasize, at the expense of the study of the past, a factual examination of the social and economic conditions of the ephemeral scene." My reason in opposing such emphasis was that knowledge of the past is essential to an understanding of the present. I mentioned the encyclicals because they had been vaguely referred to by the writer whom I was criticizing (Frances Sweeney in THE COMMONWEAL of September 23) as a sort of justification for social change and, by inference, I thought, for the specific educational changes which she was advocating. Inasmuch as it has already been made possible for boys and girls to graduate from high school without any study of European history, aside from the scraps which they may pick up in a rapid survey of American history, I believe that the emphasis advocated by Miss Sweeney should be vigorously opposed. The encyclicals, and the conditions which occasioned them are, I might have stated, powerful reasons why that emphasis should be opposed, and pupils provided with an historical background of understanding. It is difficult to see why these remarks should have been construed as an audacious judgment on the pronouncements of the Pope. For me to pass judgment on the encyclicals would indeed be witless as well as bold, and I would not "dare" to do so, any more than I would approve the educator quoted by Sister Mary de Lourdes in his assertion that the Catholic Church will not build her educational system on the principles expressed in the encyclicals.

A wider acquaintance with Catholic schools would, I feel sure, convince Sister Mary de Lourdes that not a few

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of them are giving sincere attention to the encyclicals, as they have striven in the past to build an educational system on the traditional Catholic principles expressed therein. In the matter of relating social and economic problems to the school, the situation is hardly so bleak as she envisions it. I mention only one recent and auspicious instance, the reaffirmation by the Benedictines of their ancient technique and their rededication to it—that is, the cultivation of the land combined with the cultivation of the intellect, a method which goes to the heart of economic and educational problems and attempts to solve them together. That technique once both worked economic salvation and preserved learning. It is not applicable to every situation, of course, but we would do well to remember that we have such achievements behind us, and do not quite need to grope in the dark. The most fruitless notion we can adopt is that which pervades so much modern educational theorizing—that old methods are necessarily poor methods, and the new and the different necessarily a step forward.

CLARA GLENN.

West Hartford, Conn.

TO the Editors: I am aware that the context showed the *question* to be "whether schools ought to depart from the traditional disciplines and emphases, in particular whether they ought to emphasize, at the expense of the study of the past, a factual examination of the social and economic conditions of the ephemeral scene." These questions are basic in the study of curriculum and education. Whether or not to depart from the traditional disciplines and emphases is a question of curriculum construction and revision. Whether or not to emphasize, at the expense of the study of the past, a factual examination of the social and economic condition of the ephemeral present is a question in the same area. Mighty are the conflicts among curriculum specialists on these very issues.

I agree that the knowledge of the past is essential to an understanding of the present. It has been found, however, that the study of modern problems is the high power motivation that energizes the student in his study of the past, vitalizing for him what too often remain the dry bones of facts in the usual courses in history. It is, moreover, the necessary means of integrating the student since through this study he is able to relate his present conflicts to the experience of humanity through the ages.

It is a well-known fact that Catholic schools are giving sincere attention to the encyclicals, some more than others. To build a curriculum from pre-school through university throughout the land—perhaps throughout the world—is a different task. The quotation from the educator who stated that the Catholic Church would not do so was used not as a sign of approval but for the purpose of discovering those who would be interested in this task on the various school levels. Already it is fulfilling its purpose. I am grateful to Miss Glenn for giving me the opportunity to bring this before the mind of Catholic educators.

May I use this opportunity to ask that a correction be made in my article of January 27? The sentence reads, "We should not take a substitution of symbols for meanings too seriously." It should read, "We cannot take this substitution of symbols for meanings too seriously." Through this misprint the meaning is confused.

SISTER MARY DE LOURDES.

Flushing, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Sister Mary de Lourdes' paper, delightful and scholarly though it was, did not refute the fundamental objection to progressive school education. In these schools pupils, through systems of personal preferences based upon individual interests, are enabled to follow the easiest way, the course of least mental resistance to learning. This is ethically hazardous because life is merely continued learning and there is no pleasant path, for very long; therefore the progressive school youngster is apt to emerge from school without having "learned how to learn," to repeat Ella Frances Lynch's superb wording of the motive of elementary education.

Psychologically also it seems to me that progressive education is lopsided. The mind is composed of three departments: memory, perception and imagination. Education is properly pursued only when there is a harmonious development of the three processes in proper proportion and correlation. Progressive education overdevelops perception to the neglect of imagination which is equally important. Besides, it trusts perception to too great a degree, forgetting that a sensuous response to a subject presented objectively does not necessarily connote a permanent acquisition of the facts thus presented. A child may be stimulated to attention by three red sticks and two bright blue ones and shout out triumphantly, "Five!" But he has not brought into play nearly as much mental muscle as the tot who creates the concept five by subjective exercise of will in forced attention. It is not such a hard task to apply learning practically as the progressive educators would have us think . . . especially if we try to make three cents and two cents do the work of six cents!

Sister calls learning an active process which of course it is. But she is wrong, I think, in the reason she gives for Johnny's failure to be a scholar. He fails neither because "he submitted with difficulty to the efforts of the school to train his mind" nor because "the school was wrong in thinking it could force scholarship upon him." He failed because the school failed to teach him how to force himself to learn when learning was an ordeal and not a pleasant pastime. Here, in justice to all educational systems, it should be remembered that the ubiquitous Johnny is hampered by various other influences, physical and sociological.

Sister states, "The greater the experience, the wider and deeper the meaning." This is, I think, a fallacy. An analysis of the average religious vocation is proof. If Sister's declaration were true, the most understanding nurse would be a recovered invalid, the best teacher a mother or father, the outstanding humanitarian a product of poverty and the slums. This perhaps should be so, but it is not. The fact that it is not is what makes women like Dorothy Day outstanding as exceptions, in Christian kindliness. On the average, the human helpers of the

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world spiritually, socially, educationally, are those "who think in their own hearts" . . . in other words, who can imagine what they have not actually experienced.

Of course it is true that "learning takes place by discovery." But this discovery comes just as readily without objective presentation called by Sister, "experience." Was not America, for instance, actually discovered in a man's imagination? And weren't the Santa Maria, the Pinta and the Nina merely the implements of proof to others? Did not Grant and Pershing actually save our country by poring over books at West Point, analyzing verbal theories, knowing what to do and how to do it long before they had to try out these theories in terrible object lessons? History does not record any sham battles for the sake of practical experience. A generation that despises books in education is treading upon dangerous ground.

It is treading on dangerous ground to confuse traditional education with "escapism." Preparation would be the better term. Elementary education should consist of the first step of Herbart's five. Well begun is half done. Children should be made ready to meet life (learn how to learn) before they are taken out to face it. There is no turning back. Besides, early failure at school may not mean a thing of more importance than temporary embarrassment. Failure is not failure if, in spite of it, a child has learned how to try hard. Hope springs eternal.

It crystallizes to this: modern life takes nothing for granted. The world is conducted according to the "you got to show me" attitude. Progressive education is the mental equivalent of this "you got to show me" attitude. It makes every child a doubting Thomas. If you want him to believe something, well then prove it, show him! A lesson to Four A on the Statue of Liberty—with words, illustrations, a teacher's enthusiastic descriptions? Mercy! No! A thousand times "No!" Give the kids a day off from reading, writing and arithmetic and take them for a sail down the bay for an object lesson. Let them look the lady over as they munch a bag of peanuts. As to the inland children who are also interested in liberty (statued and otherwise)—well, they are just out of luck! They'll just have to be contented to grow up into Abraham Lincolns, William Allen Whites and Carrie Chapman Catts . . . old-fashioned but rather serviceable.

MARIE DUFF.

West Hartford, Conn.

TO the Editors: "Education and Escapism" was not intended to refute fundamental objections to progressive school education. It was concerned with Christian Education and the light that Saint Thomas throws on the nature of the learning process. In "De Magistro" there is no evidence that Saint Thomas considers learning to fall of necessity into one of two classes—the "ordeal" or the "pleasant pastime"—but he does say quite a little about reason, a mental process that Miss Duff fails to include in her list of departments of the mind.

Educators agree that the drive to learn is intrinsic. Everybody knows the perpetual "Why?" of the little child. What frustrates the child later in school life so that external force seems necessary is worth thinking about. Saint Thomas has an answer.

I do not see any reason for refuting the rest of the article. "From Union Square to Rome," by Dorothy Day, is answer enough to what Miss Duff calls a fallacy.

SISTER MARY DE LOURDES.

Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.

TO the Editors: In my letter appearing in the February 3 issue concerning "Individual Instruction" one sentence is printed to read: "Children do not like discipline. . . . " It should have been: "Children do like discipline . . . " I had almost added: "It is so much easier to do as one is told than to think for oneself." Since reading Sister Mary de Lourdes' article, "Education and Escapism," I might say that traditional school discipline is a pleasant escape while the discipline of progressive education is that of the life around us.

Sister Mary de Lourdes' article is excellent. It should be studied by all who are interested in education.

MADGE MAE MISNER.

A PLEA FOR SNAILS

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: As I am a somewhat naive soul I was much cheered by reading Madeleine Swift Auld's article on "Kitchen French" in the February 3, 1939, issue of THE COMMONWEAL. That sort of article strikes a sympathetic chord and it is a relief from the more weighty matters which are discussed on all sides. It also occurs to me that many of our troubles, political and otherwise, may be due to faulty cooking, indigestion and consequent ill-temper. That is why I bow to the author of this cheerful article and express a wish for more of the same type.

This also gives me an opportunity to express my opinion on the excellence of a much neglected delicacy—the lowly snail. During my student days in Paris I attempted, on several occasions, to induce newly arrived Americans to taste this luscious delicacy but without much success. The very sound of the word "snail" was enough to nullify the effect of my culinary eloquence. And when I succeeded in bringing my victim to the point when he would agree to have the tempting dish brought to him the net result would be that I usually ate my share and also that of my victim.

The author of the "Kitchen French" article suggests that snails taste better if called *escargots*. That might well be and yet I fail to understand why the sound of the word "clam" or even "oyster" should be accepted without a murmur! And think of the delicate sauce that is used by a competent snail cook: a combination of sweet butter, garlic or *échalotte* (or both) and parsley, all finely ground up. This combination is first poured in the shell, then the snail is cupped in his individual house, more of this combination is poured on and the whole business served hot: a decent portion consists of at least a dozen of these discreet little animals. Then we should not forget a bottle of white wine and good, crusty French bread. What a treat!

MAURICE LAVANOUX.

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The Stage & Screen

The Little Foxes

LILLIAN HELLMAN'S play is not a pleasant one, but it is about real people. It is admirably written and admirably constructed. With "Here Come the Clowns" and "Abraham Lincoln in Illinois," it will undoubtedly be a candidate for the Pulitzer Prize. And at last Tallulah Bankhead has a part worthy of her talent. "The Little Foxes" tells the story of a Southern family which stems from near white trash beginnings, but which by hard dealing and cheating has made money and annexed both the plantation and the daughter of a family of aristocrats. They are a precious trio—two brothers and a sister, the sister Regina being played by Miss Bankhead. The only pleasant people are Regina's pathetic browbeaten sister-in-law, her dying husband, her daughter and her two Negro servants, and of them, only the daughter at the end has a chance tof happiness. The play is a study in avarice, with the superficially charming but indomitable Regina, who does not stop at what is really murder of her husband in order to attain a three-quarters share in the family fortune, triumphant at the end. Underneath, the play has social implications, for the Hubbards represent the new South of the early years of the century, the South of child labor. Miss Hellman evidently has a tender spot in her heart for the South of the aristocrats, but for the South of the mill owners she has contempt and hatred. But whatever her social beliefs Miss Hellman is an artist and does not load the dice unduly. Her Hubbards are a base lot indeed, but they are believable, and at least the courage of the sister and elder brother are admirable.

Miss Bankhead gives a remarkable performance as Regina. There have been times when we have felt that Miss Bankhead has carried a play by the driving force of her personality, but in "The Little Foxes" she sinks herself in her part. In its extraordinary variety, its combination of charm, common-sense, courage, avarice and utter unscrupulousness her Regina is a figure who might have stepped out of the pages of Balzac. As the pathetic aristocrat Patricia Collings gives also a beautiful performance. Florence Williams has both sensitiveness and, when required, passion as the unhappy daughter, and Frank Conroy gives an appealing enactment of Regina's dying husband. Herman Shumlin has directed it most effectively. (At the National Theatre.)

Stars in Your Eyes

ETHEL MERMAN, Jimmy Durante, Tamara Toumanova and Mildred Natwick ought to be enough to make any musical a hit, and they are enough in this one, with the aid of a rather out of the ordinary book by J. P. McEvoy and admirable staging by Joshuo Logan and settings by Jo Mielziner, even though Arthur Schwartz's music is inferior to the performances and the book. But Miss Merman can put over a song only as Miss Merman can. Mr. Durante is funnier than ever, Miss Toumanova dances like a young Pavlowa, and Mildred Natwick shows another facet of her unusual talent. The show is cleaner on the whole than many other Broadway musicals, though there is one scene which oversteps the bounds of good taste. (At the Majestic Theatre.) GRENVILLE VERNON.

No Water; Lucius Beebe; Murder; Opera

A LOT of good acting talent is wasted in "Yes, My Darling Daughter," the new Warner Brothers' picture that the New York State Board of Censors has banned. Fay Bainter, Roland Young, Genevieve Tobin, Ian Hunter, May Robson, Priscilla Lane and Jeffrey Lynn pitch in and do their best which is much too good for this badly bungled film version of Mark Reed's play. Emphasis in the movie, directed by William Keighley, is on the daughter and her "boy-friend." These romantic interludes detract from the main theme concerning Fay Bainter, as the mother who had been a wild one in her youth, running all over Greenwich Village as a pioneer for women's freedom, who now discovers that her chickens are coming home to roost and she is unable to dissuade her daughter from going away on a "cheap week-end." The daughter, having her fling at being modern, thinks her mother is a hypocrite and that oldsters are naive and stuffy. Unfortunately the film mixes serious discussion of morality (the unsound morality of the "oh-the-brave-young-things" school) with comic horse-play that throws half the cast in jail. The wisecracks fall pretty flat, but those who do see this picture will agree with Jeffrey Lynn when he exclaims, "What kind of a family is this, anyway!"

"Café Society" is interesting mainly because it suggests that an exceedingly rich girl does have obligations to the rest of society. It doesn't state clearly what these responsibilities are, but the mere fact that their existence is recognized at all is encouraging after the first half of this film's ceaseless, smart chit-chat, glittering tinselly pseudo-ladies and gentlemen, disrespect for marriage, and frivolous attitude toward life. The action picks up when Grandpa Claude Gillingwater makes pretty, brittle, wealthy Madeleine Carroll stick by her marriage to a poor-but-honest reporter, Fred MacMurray. On the whole, "Café Society" makes a pretty good picture, thanks to Virginia Van Upp's script, Edward H. Griffith's direction, and a cast who present this society without overacting.

"Fast and Loose" tries hard to be one of those murder-mystery comedies like "The Thin Man," but it's not fast, loose or particularly interesting. A good cast, headed by Robert Montgomery and Rosalind Russell pop in and out of doors, talk about a stolen Shakespeare manuscript, and ask, "Where were you when the rumpus started?" in the manner of playing that once popular game of "Murder."

Without being pretentious, "Wife, Husband and Friend" turns out to be rather amusing fun. Based on a novel by James M. Cain, it has to do with a building contractor (Warner Baxter) whose wife (Loretta Young) wants to be a singer. He says she's a lousy singer; she says he's a mug; so she sings. But an opera star (Binnie Barnes) discovers that Baxter is the one with the good voices; and—you know: they all laughed when he stepped up to the piano until—. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Lincoln[1]

By WALTER PRICHARD EATON

AMERICA continues with unabated interest the search for new understanding of Lincoln, and new comfort from a contemplation of his rugged benignity. Indeed, at the present moment there is an increased interest because in a period of doubt, even of despair, it is discovered that at a somewhat similar period he had much to say about democracy which is enormously heartening. Probably the immediate cause of the great popularity of Robert Sherwood's play, "Abe Lincoln in Illinois," is to be found in the fact that a very fine and persuasive actor speaks these words to us with the seeming tongue of Lincoln himself. How else can we account for that scene in the play when Douglas and Lincoln debate — just two stump speeches compiled out of history? Under ordinary circumstances this scene would bore an audience to tears. Actually, it enthralls them.

It is not this element in the drama, however, which gives it its abiding interest, or which will linger longest in the afterthoughts of the spectators. Going to the sources of Lincoln lore, especially (after a reading of Sandburg's "The Prairie Years") to the spade work done by Lincoln's partner, Herndon, Sherwood has attempted in his play to depict a strange and baffling character, a frontier humorist and a frontier Hamlet, a man who was slow to achieve self-confidence and slower yet to achieve high purpose and direction. His play ends with Lincoln's departure for the White House; in other words, it is concerned not with depicting the leader of the nation through the war, but the process by which this strange, unpromising man grew into the material for leadership. This is a difficult task, not only because so little is really known about Lincoln's inner being during those years, but also because a profound character has to be illustrated not by his reactions to profound events (as would be the case after Lincoln was President), but by his reactions to the simple, even primitive life of the frontier. Not only is it something of a mystery how Lincoln could have developed under these conditions, but technically it is an extremely difficult task to illustrate this development. Remember that Lincoln left no records of his soul states, save as they can be inferred sometimes from his speeches. His funny stories and his wit were rather typically frontier. And remember that while a dramatist does not hesitate, in a historical play, to invent speeches for his minor characters which will move his story forward and focus his theme, he has to think twice before he starts inventing dialogue for Abraham Lincoln. And there is no recorded dialogue of Lincoln's which tells us what Mr. Sherwood wants to tell.

What Sherwood most wished to tell, I think, is summed up in a sentence Speed wrote to Herndon, "He must believe he was right, and that he had truth and justice with him, or he was a weak man; but no man could be stronger if he thought he was right." To show us the weak Lincoln, to show us the gradual infiltration of a belief in the truth and justice of the cause he was called on to lead, an infiltration which met the resistance of doubts and broodings curiously suggestive of Hamlet, and finally to show the emergence of a man who was the champion of democracy as the justice of God, was Mr. Sherwood's task. With what under the circumstances is a minimum of historical invention, this task he has brilliantly performed, brilliantly because he has given us a three-dimensional character and because he has not forgotten, also, that he is writing a play which must be effective in the theatre. The success of this drama is richly deserved.

Emanuel Hertz's "The Hidden Lincoln" did not come out till Mr. Sherwood had written his play, or doubtless the dramatist would have made use of it. Mr. Hertz's new book, "Lincoln Talks," is a collection of over 600 pages of Lincoln stories and anecdotes, gathered from a thousand sources. But as Sherwood points out, Lincoln's humor was the only thing simple about him. You could read this entire collection, and still you would be little nearer that secret Lincoln the dramatist was trying to come at. But you would have a pretty good time. There are two versions of the famous boot-blacking episode. According to one, when Lord Lyons saw the President brushing his own boots, he said that wasn't proper for a President, and Lincoln replied, "If the President shouldn't brush his own boots, in Heaven's name whose should he brush?" In the other version, Lord Lyons said, "In England no gentleman cleans his own boots," and Lincoln replied, "Whose boots does he clean?"—which sounds, somehow, much more like a frontier retort. Lincoln's memory for pat stories must have been prodigious, and so was his calm, humorous common sense which is also illustrated in this collection. Plainly the book will be in great demand by all public speakers. There is something in it pat to every occasion.

John Hay, in his early twenties, was a secretary to Lincoln during the war, leaving to be a secretary to Bigelow, the Minister to France. He kept diaries, and he wrote many letters. Tyler Dennett, as an aftermath to his life of Hay, has now issued a selection from those diaries and letters, especially as they mention Lincoln and the war. Hay was a charming youngster, with a much more sophisticated humor than Lincoln's, and obviously he had no idea anything he wrote would ever reach posterity. He was amused because Lincoln "caught at any fact" which would justify him in saving the life of a condemned soldier. "Cases of cowardice he was specially averse to punishing with death. He said it would frighten the poor devils too terribly, to shoot them." Obviously Hay was amused at Lincoln's humor, and at Lincoln. There is little probing of a great spirit here. The book would not have helped Sherwood. Indeed, it is actually more interesting as a revelation of Hay than of Lincoln. At his best, Hay was one of the most delightful letter

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[1] Abe Lincoln in Illinois, by Robert E. Sherwood. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

Lincoln Talks, A Biography in Anecdote, compiled by Emanuel Hertz. New York: Viking Press. $3.00.

Lincoln and the Civil War, in the Letters and Diaries of John Hay, by Tyler Dennett. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company. $4.00.

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writers in our history, and there are passages here which suggest those marvelous letters George Etherege wrote from his diplomatic post in Germany, back in the days of the Restoration. Writing from Paris to Mrs. Bigelow, he ends: "An elderly person called yesterday. . . . She looked as if her affections had been trifled with. She was in a hurry—had many letters to write—wanted to know General Scott's address. I informed her of the General's change of planet. She said, 'How dreadful. I was like a daughter to him. Dear! dear! Well—,' after a pause, 'there's one less letter to write. I'm glad of that.'"

They are quite too long to quote, but if you wish to see how a young American in the 1860's could write with a smiling irony and superb vividness of the court of France, read Hay's diaries and letters during his stay in Paris. His style was not adapted to recording Lincoln. It would have been perfect for Queen Victoria.

Other Books of the Day

Snow Hidden

Unsolved Mysteries of the Arctic, by Vilhjalmur Stefansson. New York: The Macmillan Company. $3.50.

MR. STEFANSSON has given me both intense pleasure and wide information in his recent book, "Unsolved Mysteries of the Arctic." He has, moreover, disciplined my attention and my memory in the ten or twelve hours which I have gladly spent with him on ice floes and on islands hitherto, to me at least, quite unknown. First of all a scientist, completely at home in his chosen field of scientific exploration, he has employed the minute and exhaustive method of the scientist in his presentation and solution of the five problems which he sets before us and proceeds to scrutinize. What became of the nine thousand European colonists who in the fifteenth century were living on Greenland? Of the men who in 1845 accompanied Sir John Franklin to the Arctic? What actually was the strange fate of Thomas Simpson, last heard from in 1840? How did Andrée, the Swedish airman who astounded the world by his balloon ascension in July, 1897, forfeit his life? What became of the Soviet fliers who in August, 1937, started upon their sensational flight? All of these tragedies of the Arctic are minutely examined, not only in the light of all previous theories and explanations but also, and more interestingly, in the sharper light of the author's own experience and inexhaustible knowledge of Arctic conditions and of the manner and means of life in those regions. As we read, unable, even fearful, to miss a sentence, a word, we are not only convinced by unassailable arguments of the truth of contentions advanced, but we become at the same time almost unconsciously corrected on a hundred misconceptions concerning life in the Arctic, its cold, its vegetation, its animal life, its food and means of shelter.

And yet we must not stop here in our tribute to Mr. Stefansson. The half has not been told! He is more than a scientist and geographer. What a novel reveals itself beneath and within his skilful use of language in describing the disappearance of the Greenland colony! Once a bishopric in the Middle Ages, from its shores polar bear and falcons were sent as secular and Churchly gifts to temporal and ecclesiastical rulers of Europe! What stories here rear their heads and capture our imaginations! Mr.

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Stefansson is a dramatist as well, seeing in his Arctic skies and frozen, floating seas unrelenting protagonists which war against his supermen like Andrée and Levanevsky. These skies and seas, before which men are often powerless, become, indeed, his gods and Fates; and the weakness of men like Franklin and Simpson, with all their strength, determines their destiny quite as much as the anger of Sophocles's Ajax determined his own.

Thus this book partakes of the qualities of the finest fiction and the finest tragedy; and because of this fact it becomes far more than a splendid piece of scientific writing, far more than an engrossing narrative. It is a book for all readers everywhere. Young boys will devour it; men of every age will delight in it. But, better still, all readers who wisely read for what is not said quite as much as for what is said, will garner from its necessarily uncompleted incidents scores of situations absorbing in their drama and breath-taking in their suspense. For here, indeed, is the bright face of danger, the red badge of courage. Here, indeed, is a book which no one under any circumstances should miss. MARY ELLEN CHASE.

BIOGRAPHY

George Santayana, by George W. Howgate. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. $3.50.

THOUGH this is not the first study of the determinist philosopher and recent best-selling novelist who wisely deserted Harvard about 1912 to live abroad, it is likely to remain the standard one for a long time. The reader should be reminded, however, that Mr. Howgate's book is a sympathetic account of Santayana's mind rather than a biography. As some critic has written lately, a genuine life of this philosopher would bore the average reader as much as "The Last Puritan" strangely appealed to it, since Santayana has remained primarily a teacher even in becoming a novelist. The personal lives of teachers are not particularly interesting, and the great events in the career of this moralist are the publication dates of his mellifluous and often very questionable books.

We have Mr. Howgate as an authority for the fact that Santayana, on receiving his first teaching appointment in the philosophy department at Harvard, "emanated an air of mystery" which gave rise to several fantastic and ambiguous myths of the sort utilized by Charles Flandrau in his affected and rather unpleasant volume, "Harvard Episodes." The late President Eliot is said to have disapproved of the Spanish esthetician on much the same grounds that Jowett disapproved of Pater, but Santayana was warmly backed by such colleagues as Munsterberg and William James, both now as dead as that pre-war Harvard. At that time Santayana was the object of a local cult which has unquestionably survived and has spread far. In my own time I can remember the long window of Prescott Hall, occasionally filled by the dark, stoutening, but always dignified and even majestic figure, gazing critically down on the autumnal wrack and human void of the dismal Cambridge street. It is only fair to add that his influence as a philosopher and writer is manifest in the work of Walter Lippman, Harold Stearns, and other distinguished pundits from the generation that was still young in those dim, unhappy days.

If I seem to write of the great thinker and *prosateur* with an air of some understatement, it is because Santayana, despite the warmth and cosmic poetry in which he contrives to wrap the most complicated problems, is not (speaking personally) a very sympathetic figure. That famous irony and detachment often suggest the same qualities tediously celebrated in Anatole France, and the hollowness of both moralists is sometimes disconcertingly evident. Most of his life Santayana wrote for the few, then unexpectedly blossomed out with "The Last Puritan" which was relished by the many; but the same disheartening *malaise* experienced from much of his criticism is implicit in the novel if it be a novel. It has been pointed out that most of his characters are lay figures who have the habit of declaiming in honeyed phrases much in the style of the author. He could only depict women humorously or maliciously, never with complete realism, although Mrs. Alden, the New England matriarch, seems depressingly true to life. I remember Santayana saying once in a lecture that it is immoral to treat human beings as if they were works of art. Unhappily, that is almost the only treatment one can accord to Santayana.

CUTHBERT WRIGHT.

CRITICISM

Modern Poetry: A Personal Essay, by Louis Macneice. London: Oxford University Press. $3.00.

GOOD criticism of modern poetry is as rare today as good poetry. Louis Macneice has material and opportunity for both. In "Modern Poetry" he discusses subject and form in contemporary verse, the personal background that has conditioned contemporary poets, the qualities of poetry. A friend of Auden and Spender and a companion poet, he lives close to his subject. He is, in fact, too close for perspective, too young for maturity of judgment.

His book is patently that of a man of thirty-one and reads, in part, like papers written at Oxford which seem to him a bit too good to be burned. In parts it is a year-by-year Freudian interpretation of his own experience with poetry up to the time of his marriage. It is all young, stuffed with quantities of omniverous reading, pentecostal in its many tongues.

The chapter on "Imagery" will illustrate. Beginning with Dante, the author has in ten pages ranged, in this order, through Aristotle, Plato, the early Chinese poets, Donne, Christina Rossetti, Emily Dickinson, Crashaw, the Greek and Latin poets, Joyce, Cummings, the seventeenth-, eighteenth-, nineteenth-century English poets, Baudelaire, Mallarmé. He has quoted poetry in five languages, including Middle English. Having done this, one wonders what possibly he can have done with Imagery.

His book is naïve and well intentioned. Ten years from now Mr. Macneice will not write, even if it is true: "Doggerel writers often attain good, and special, effects without having aimed at them." "As for rhyme, rhyme also is returning." "And blank verse should be strong rather than pretty."

He will hardly consider "Lighter Poetry and Drama" as a single chapter when it is to include such texts as "Murder in the Cathedral." He will have developed devices for citation beyond "Witness Eliot," "Witness again Day Lewis," four times repeated on a single page. He will have eliminated from his vocabulary "sordor," "townee," "anacolutha."

He will still agree with his great masters, but not in these words: "While I agree with Wordsworth that the poet ought to keep in touch with flesh and blood, I agree with Aristotle that poetry can often be more effective if its language is heightened. But this heightening must

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be appropriate." The fact that his present volume is compact with this type of commentary and style is, perhaps, its most adequate criticism. SISTER M. MADELEVA.

History of American Magazines, 1850-1865, 1865-1885, by Frank Luther Mott. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Volumes II and III. $5.00 each.

EVERY now and then there comes a book which sums up and settles a rather large subject, once for all. New discoveries may require modifications in the text; changing points of view may have to be taken into account. But the big book remains through all such changes as fundamental authority.

Such books are rare. They require special talents, special training, and an amount of work so huge that nobody except the author—and the author's wife—ever suspects it, especially when, as with Dr. Mott's new volumes, journalistic skill in presentation is added to a scholar's thoroughness.

There is no doubt that from the very first volume, the "History of American Magazines" has taken rank in this small and distinguished group. The first volume, bringing the story up to 1850, was published by D. Appleton and Company in 1930. Since then, the whole enterprise has been taken over by the Harvard University Press, with funds supplied by the Modern Language Association.

The two new volumes now issued carry the history from 1850 to 1885. The last half-century, in which magazines have flourished and faded as never before, will occupy the final volume or volumes, on which the author is now engaged. The recently issued volumes give the history of 76 periodicals in detail, doing full justice to the editorial work of Father Hecker and many other Catholic religious journalists, lay and clerical. The various magazines are separately treated, but the whole story is held together by a "running history" of each period, with some reference to social and editorial trends and tendencies. Dr. Mott has certainly produced one of the most notable contributions to the history of journalism ever made. JOHN BAKELESS.

American Authors: 1600-1900; edited by Stanley J. Kunitz and Howard Haycraft. New York: H. W. Wilson Company. $5.00.

SOME 1,300 biographies of men and women "who participated in the making of our literary history" are here brought within one volume. Living writers are excluded. Among those antedating our republic are the familiar names of Captain John Smith and Roger Williams. For ready reference, just appraisement and interesting reading the book deserves a place on library shelves. It is however unfortunate that, anticipating comprehensiveness, since authors of both minor and major importance are included, one looks in vain for the poets, Condé Benoist Pallen, Thomas Walsh, Louise Imogen Guiney and Joyce Kilmer, the novelist, Molly Elliot Seawell, Reverend Francis J. Finn and others. Christian Reid is cross-referred to Francis Christian Tiernan, but under this name no article appears. A great many Catholic writers are included and perhaps these omissions will be rectified in a subsequent edition. Certainly the human interest of their lives and work recorded here will make American authors better known and appreciated. An attractive feature of the book is 400 portraits, many hitherto unpublished. Good bibliographies are appended to each article. C. M. N.

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FICTION

Industrial Valley, by Ruth McKenney. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.00.

"INDUSTRIAL VALLEY" is more difficult to review than to read and to appreciate. Miss McKenney's novel is interesting from many points of view. In the first place, it really is not a novel; it represents, rather, an attempt to present an historical survey of the labor movement in Akron, Ohio, in the years 1932 to 1936. In the second place, it is scarcely history—of the traditional sort, in any event. Nor would the reviewer class it as an historical novel. It is by no means the intention of the author to distort facts for the sake of the story. Rather, she draws upon her imagination, which is very vivid, to fill in the lacunae in the facts of historical record, in order to make that record more vital and meaningful.

Because fictionalized, "Industrial Valley" is undoubtedly the most interesting and exciting study of recent labor history yet published—even if not, perhaps, the most reliable. And it is more than a study of a labor movement. Not only are the activities of workers and of employing units chronologically detailed, but the feelings and emotions, the rationale and logic, behind these activities are also portrayed, very skilfully—at times more skilfully, perhaps, than accurately.

Miss McKenney's imagination takes her everywhere, into the homes of factory owners and factory managers, into the shacks and even the conjugal chambers of workers and the unemployed, into the secret conclaves of special trade union committees and of the Communist party, into the factories at two o'clock in the morning as easily as in the middle of the day, and even when those factories, held by sit-down strikers, are closed to their managers. She has a telephone extension connecting her with the Republican party (which is always phoning sheriffs), with factory owners and with police heads. Not even the minds of men are closed to her.

Not only are such things as picket lines, sit-down strikes and tear-gas attacks vividly described, but the thoughts, the discussions, and the controversies preceding the formation of picket lines and the calling of sit-down strikes are also treated. Perhaps most important of all, an attempt is made to describe the various emotions experienced by men and women engaged in picket duty or in a sit-down strike, facing a tear-gas attack, and such.

Miss McKenney is, however, openly and militantly pro-Labor. At no point in the book does she pretend to be otherwise. Like a good old-fashioned novelist, she has set up two opposing forces, the one embodying all good, the other embodying all evil. The former is Labor, the latter Capital. She is a firm believer in the inevitability of the class-struggle in a capitalistic society. And, finally, she is quite willing to give the Communist his due—one might say, far more than his due. Her Communists are very peculiar creatures, indeed. They mouth such expressions as "Dear God," "God knows" and "God help us." When they assist in the organization of a strike, they do so without any ulterior motives, whatsoever.

Miss McKenney is biased—there can be no doubt about that. When pickets throw bricks at factory managers—that's fun. When the sheriff and his deputies attempt to stop them from doing so—that's violence. When the plant superintendent fails to have the steam shut off during a sit-down, it is because he "thinks" that the strikers will burst the pipes if he does so.

Because of its author's bias, the factual accuracy of the book is open to question. Nevertheless, "Industrial Valley" is well-worth reading. It tells an exciting story, and tells it vitally. The style is, in general, quite good. But the same woman who can speak of men "deafened by the silence," can also reach such melodramatic depths as "'You said it, Joe,' the tirebuilders answered loud and clear." Its scrap-book arrangement adds immeasurably to the interest of the book. EDWARD S. LYNCH.

MEMOIRS

Through Embassy Eyes, by Martha Dodd. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.00.

THIS is an unimportant book, but it is an amusing one. It is very prejudiced, very feminine, and very well written—that is, in the portions dealing with people Miss Dodd has known personally. Her pen pictures of "Putzi" Hanfstaengel are in particular well done. She is the first writer who has made us feel the charm of that interesting and much maligned figure. Admirable too is her description of Rolf Diels, the predecessor of Himmler as chief of the secret police. She brings out most dramatically his saturnine, mephistophelian nature, and yet makes credible the evident pleasure she took in his company. There is also a charming portrait of Prince Louis Ferdinand, and a most sympathetic one of General Udet. In short when Miss Dodd's personal sympathies are involved, she turns out most readable copy.

It is a pity, however, that the daughter of our former Ambassador to Germany should be able to give us only second-hand impressions of the leading figures among the Nazis. She evidently never got to know them more than casually, and her remarks about them are a combination of the fulminations of a parlor pink with what has been written about them by others. Miss Dodd's superficiality is shown by her account of her short trip to Russia. She was already sold on the Bolsheviks when she went, and she saw nothing during her stay to shake her naive faith in the virtue of Stalin & Co. It is this closing of her mind to the broader, deeper aspects of men and events which limit her as a commentator on the days when Hitler first seized power. It is a pity, for she had a splendid opportunity to see things from the inside. It is not that her hatred of the Nazi régime is not justified, only I feel that the extravagance of her language is rather the product of her left-wing sympathies than a considered judgment on the Nazis themselves. GRENVILLE VERNON.

TRAVEL

Venezuela, by Erna Fergusson. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. $3.00.

THE AUTHOR of this informative treatise appears to be one of the rapidly shrinking number of "liberals" in the negative sense of that loosely used term. She approaches the country without too many positive preconceptions, delves into its history, explores its terrain, talks with the people and comes up with an exceedingly sympathetic account of her findings. She is appalled by the lethargy, malnutrition and disease she encountered; the youth of the land stirred her hopes for a new Venezuela "free . . . from the fetters of tradition." But her book does indicate that the United States could contribute much more heavily to the well-being of Latin America through collaboration in stamping out infant mortality and chronic disease and raising the living standards of our neighbors generally. E. S. S.

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The Inner Forum

THE CUSTOM of having a "conclave" of cardinals, an "enclosure," that is, with the cardinals altogether isolated while electing a Pope, arose with a law introduced in the Council of Lyons in 1274 by Pope Gregory X. There are today 62 cardinals: 35 Italian, 6 French, 4 German, including Cardinal Innitzer of Vienna, 3 American, 3 Spanish, 1 Belgian, 1 Hungarian, 1 Polish, 1 Portuguese, 1 Brazilian, 1 Czecho-Slovakian, 1 English, 1 Irish, 1 Argentinian, 1 Canadian and 1 from Iraq.

The interregnum and election are regulated by four papal acts: Constitution "Vacante Sede Apostolica," published by Pius X on December 25, 1904; Constitution "Commissum Nobis," published by Pius X, January 20, 1904; Constitution "Praedecessoris Nostri," with the annexed Regulation, published by Leo XIII on May 24, 1882; Motu Proprio "Cum Proxime," published by Pius XI on March 1, 1922.

"Commissum Nobis" contains the governing articles guarding the election against lay pressure and the "veto power," which was supposed to have been exercised in behalf of Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria after the death of Leo XIII: "In virtue of holy obedience, under the threat of divine justice and the penalty of excommunication 'latae sententiae' reserved in a special way for the future Pontiff, we forbid all and each of the cardinals, both present and future, and equally the Secretary of the Sacred College and all those who take part in the conclave, to receive on any pretext, from any whatsoever civil power, the charge of proposing the 'veto' or the exclusion under any form of simple desire; and we forbid them, in the case of any such veto becoming known in any way, to manifest it to either all the Sacred College assembled together or to each single cardinal, or by writing or verbally, or directly or by approximation, or indirectly by means of others. And we desire that this prohibition be extended to all members present, affecting intercessions or any other method whereby lay powers of any rank and order seek to mix themselves in the election of the Pontiff."

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